UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE CALL TO BECOME AN EDUCATOR

BY

HAROLD HOWARD (HAL) KLUCZNY ©

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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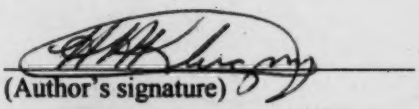

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Abstract

This memoir, a narrative inquiry, was designed to explore those forces and influences that were potent in shaping my becoming an educator. A primary goal of the study was to acquire an intrinsic understanding of myself and how my personality attributes and life experiences sculpted me, leading to my current station as educator. To achieve this primary goal, it was necessary to compare my adventure with those of other educators, hence gaining a deeper understanding by resonating my experiences with theirs.

The research was confined to investigating those factors perceived by the participants and me to have been instrumental in influencing us to become educators. The participants, five in number, were educators chosen because of their interest in narrative inquiry, and their propensity to think and express themselves in story. Field texts consisted of our socially constructed realities, gathered through conversational interviews and interpreted by me, the researcher.

As a by-product of the memoir, a theory emerged, explaining those influences that led us to become educators. The theory revealed relationships between general parent influences, secondary influencer traits, and primary influencer factors. The secondary influencers were a number of character traits. The primary influencers were personal spirituality, serendipity, marginalization, parent effect in vocational choice, negative teacher experiences, a serving and helping trait, a caring and understanding trait, a joy in seeing others grow, a love of subject area, and a belief in the importance of teaching. A powerfully catalyzing positive experience with a very special teacher(s)

culminated the influencing process, channelling each of us to choose an educational vocation.

By seeking to know ourselves better, we met Noddings' (1986) criteria for "fidelity" in educational research, such that the knowledge gained will maintain the caring community and promote individual growth, for the participants and me as we become more developed human beings, and for those we serve as we become better leaders and educators. If part of the merit of this study is the achievement of increased self-understanding for improved practice, then of even greater merit is the accomplishment of the task in a caring way.

DEDICATION

To my family, now and then,

you whose stories made me yen.

Past and present, here and there,

your loving touch I'll always wear.

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Undertaking a doctoral program is no mean enterprise. It requires not only the industrious dedication of the student, but also a foundation of support from many others. It is a story of teamwork, with cooperation, advice, assistance, and sustenance flowing from a network of benefactors.

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Second, I must recognize the contribution of my family: wife Sheila, son Aaron, and daughter Miriam. You were each so nurturing, with your understanding and tolerance of my demanding study schedule. Your love, patience, and forbearance have made this doctoral experience possible. I thank each of you from the depths of my being and return my love. Also to those other loved ones of family, some still here and others gone on, your legacy remains in the story I live.

Third, I express gratitude and friendship to my participants. These five people were willing to share their lives with me, telling their stories and contributing to my narrative. Their interest, willingness, and sincerity enriched the quality of my memoir and made it possible to tell a theoretical story as part of my research. I shall always remember each of them, valuing their friendship and collegiality.

Fourth, I thank my Board of Trustees in Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools for giving me the opportunity to engage in this academic venture. Their commitment to the education of our children and youth has inspired me all along. As I continue to serve them in leadership, I will ever seek ways to improve the quality of our education system.

Last, I must pay tribute to the universal Creator, that spiritual force which sustains and guides me as I negotiate life's paths; the One whose love and gentle nudgings have given me strength, endurance, direction, and peace throughout the journey; the One through whom I am intimately connected to all creation. In closing, I ask Your special blessing on all those aforementioned in this acknowledgment.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	**A STORY BECOMES AN EDUCATOR**	1
	Stories Call	1
	A Calling	3
	An Inquiry Interest	4
	A Purpose for Inquiry	5
	The Definitions	7
	The Assumptions	8
	The Limitations	9
	The Boundaries	9
	The Puzzling Question	10
	The Significance	10
	As a Superintendent	11
	As an Educator	12
	In Research Fidelity	12
	In Generated Theory	14
	The Becoming	16
II	**THE LITERATURE TELLS A STORY**	18
	Of Elder's Wisdom	18
	Of Self-Understanding	21
	Of Personality Characteristics	25
	Of Personal Experience	30

CHAPTER **PAGE**

Of Vocational Path Motivation....34

Of Memory Role....41

Literature Restoried....46

III THE METHOD TELLS A STORY....48

Of Servant Leadership....48

Of Method Choice....49

Of Being and Knowing: Ontology and Epistemology....50

My World View....50

My Ontological Being....52

My Epistemological Knowing....53

My Personal Reflexivity....55

Of Constructivist Paradigm....56

The Phenomenological Perspective....58

The Symbolic Interactionist Perspective....59

The Language Perspective....60

The Narrative Form Perspective....63

The Narrative Inquiry Perspective....67

Of Data Collection, Analysis, and Presentation....69

The Interview as Conversation....70

The Analyses of Field Texts....72

The Presentation....73

Of Trustworthiness Quality....74

CHAPTER PAGE

The Credibility....75

The Transferability....77

The Dependability....77

The Confirmability....78

Of Authenticity Quality....79

The Fairness....79

The Ontological Authenticity....79

The Educative Authenticity....80

The Catalytic Authenticity....80

The Tactical Authenticity....80

Of Hermeneutic Process Quality....81

Of Narrative Quality....81

Of Ethics and Protection of Participants....82

Method Restoried....82

IV THE PARTICIPANTS TELL A STORY....84

Of Diversity....84

The Participants....85

Of Themselves....88

Daelin's Story: My Construction....88

Jancek's Story: My Construction....94

Maronja's Story: My Construction....102

Katrynia's Story: My Construction....110

CHAPTER PAGE

Pssoh's Story: My Construction....117

Participants Restoried....122

V I TELL MY STORY: A MEMOIR....124

The Call....124

The Background....128

The Beginnings....130

The School Years....132

The Shaping Forces....138

Caring and Sensitivity....139

Peace Making and Diplomacy....143

Forgiving....147

Serving and Receiving....151

Fairness and Justice....153

Succeeding and Excelling....158

Playfulness and Humour....160

The Grand Conjunction....164

The Memoir....165

VI THE FIELD TEXTS TELL A STORY....166

Of Listening....166

The Themes....167

Of Primary Influencers....168

The Special Teacher....168

CHAPTER PAGE

The Negative Teacher Experience....170

The Parent Influence....172

The Marginalization Experience....176

The Spiritual Influence....177

The Serving and Helping Trait....178

The Understanding and Caring Trait....179

The Joy In Seeing Others Grow Trait....179

The Importance of Teaching Belief....180

The Love of Subject Area....180

Of Secondary Influencers....181

The Social Orientation Trait....182

The Moral Trait....182

The Fairness and Justice Trait....183

The Approval Seeking Trait....183

The Persevering Trait....184

The Need For Variety and Challenge Trait....185

The Anxiety Trait....185

The Competitiveness Trait....186

The Leadership Trait....186

The Trust and Honesty Trait....187

The Forgiveness Trait....187

The Perfectionism Trait....188

CHAPTER PAGE

The Analytical and Self-Evaluative Trait....189

The Humour Trait....189

Of Reflection and Instrospection....190

Becoming More Self-Reflective....190

Field Texts Restoried....191

VII THE STORIES COME TOGETHER: A THEORY....193

On Theory....193

The Nature....196

A Theory of Becoming....200

The Process....200

The Theoretical Model....202

The Storied Theory....204

Relative to Other Theory....207

Self-Understanding....207

Personality Characteristics....207

Personal Experience....208

Vocational Path Motivation....209

Memory....211

Theory Restoried....212

VIII TO LIVE A NEW STORY....213

Of My Calling....213

The Enactment....216

CHAPTER		PAGE
	Of Servantship	219
	Listening	219
	Empathy	220
	Healing	221
	Awareness	222
	Persuasion	223
	Conceptualization	225
	Foresight	225
	Stewardship	227
	Commitment to the Growth of People	228
	Building Community	229
	An Epilogue	230
	The Allusions and Admonitions: So What?	231
	Allusions	232
	Admonitions	233
	Of Sacredness	235
IX	**A STORY OF REFLECTIONS**	236
	On the Quest	236
	Seeking in the Forest	237
	Seeking Meaning and Knowing	238
	On Writing	240
	The Style	241

CHAPTER **PAGE**

The Process....242

The Product....243

On the Participants....245

On Concluding....245

REFERENCES....250

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 A Theoretical Model of Influences Shaping Individuals to Become Educators....206

CHAPTER I

A Story Becomes an Educator

Train up a child in the way he should go and when
he is old he will not depart from it.
--Prov. 22:6, *King James Version*

Stories Call

It is early afternoon and the small rolling hills are cloaked in the deep verdancy of their mid-summer foliage. The parkland forest, with its blended family of conifer and deciduous, occasionally gives way to grassy meadows sprinkled with the coloured offerings of varied flowers. A pleasantly penetrating warmth of sunshine gently bathes the scene; and the earth, in return, yields shimmering waves that emanate upward as an offering of thanksgiving. The purity of the cerulean sky is interrupted only by the occasional passage of changeling cumulus, shaping and reshaping themselves into wonderfully imaginative forms. The landscape is alive with that ubiquitious "mid-summer hum" that tells of bumble bees, growing things, and life busily underway. This scene, spiced and coloured with intermittent bird song, animal call, and the whisper of a zephyr, becomes a cathedral for reverence.

It is a favoured haunt, this sacred place, a place of reverie, a place of stories, a place of peace and harmony, one that calls me back again and again, one also trodden and loved by my father before me. I sense his spirit here with me as I commune with the whole--the universe. Lying on a hillside and being one with the beauty and completeness of this creation, I gaze down the bank at the earthy brown waters of the beaver pond cradled between the knolls. Quietly, the wood ducks paddle and the mallards dunk,

producing glistening ripples that work their way in orderly and predictable patterns to the shore. I wonder, Is my life as orderly, predictable, and patterned as those "duck ripples"? I wonder, How is it that I have come to be who and what I am? I feel that old familiar call. I close my eyes and recollect. Times, places, people, and events flood into my mind--a story forms.

> Once upon a time there was a child who loved listening to the stories read and told by his mother, his grandmother, his grandfather, and his teachers. He was transported by these stories: taken to the mystical fairy-tale kingdoms of Rapunzel, Toad of Toad Hall, and Winnie the Pooh; to the faraway places of medieval kings, queens, knights, dragons, and castles; to the endless steppe of the Hungarian farm-boy Janzi, with its breath-taking night sky; to the pastoral Swiss mountain grandeur of Heidi and her grandfather; and to the Appalachian hills and valleys of Chad, the "little shepherd of kingdom come," destined to experience the agony of the American civil war. This child empathized with and grew close to these and many other story-book characters, being molded and shaped by them. Further sculpting were the Saturday mornings of late childhood, basked in his grandfather's orality, relating experiences from a Polish immigrant community in late 19th- and early 20th-century America.
>
> The stories called the child to grow and reach out to the world, their call firing a passion for life and learning within him. They brought a deeper meaning to his being and his knowing, gently forming and shaping his own life story. In time the child grew up to become a teacher and brought more stories to other children. The teacher grew as a person, being molded and shaped by the stories of those around him, then venturing on to become a superintendent of schools who brought more stories to other teachers, principals, and parents. As the child loved listening to stories, so now the man loved living out stories that enriched the lives of other people within his reach. Today this man, I, the researcher, sets out on another storied journey, one to discover more fully what influenced him to become the story that he is: a story teller and a story liver, living, telling, and listening to the particular stories he does.

I opened my eyes, stood up, stretched, and arched my back to the warm sunshine, sending the startled ducks scurrying and producing prodigious ripples. With late afternoon nigh, I began to wander back towards the old homestead, along familiar and

cherished pathways. On this day I had made a discovery, one that would focus and channel my doctoral studies in the year to follow. I ambled on, with thoughts materializing as I contemplated my pathway to becoming an educator. Although I did not realize it at the time, I had begun the process of answering the call of a story.

A calling. Yes, the ripples in my life did bring me to become an educator. And I continue to feel as good about that choice as I feel about the sacred place of my reverie. Past and present, both choice and place are inseparably part of the holistic being I am and the destiny I pursue, now and into the future. Many people, events, situations, and feelings seem to have been somehow inextricably involved in my becoming. I believe this destiny of becoming is a natural process, one with order and purpose, one that fits harmoniously into the overall scheme of things. However, in the view of my finite mind and as a consequence of my human frailties, it has often seemed less smooth to me.

As I recollect the high value placed on education by my parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles, I do not recall an emphasis being placed on any particular vocation or career. It seemed at the time, in their concern, that it was enough to become educated, with the door left open for me to choose a vocation suiting my fancy. However, I strongly suspect that each of them held an inner longing that I would aspire to something for which they had longed, but had been stymied by their lack of sufficient formal education. But in an act of giving, they put aside their desire for vicarious fulfillment, only encouraging and supporting me, often saying, "Hal, your education is the most important thing; work hard and take your schooling seriously." Although my father often discussed a variety of prospective careers with me, he always said, "You go ahead and pick something that suits you, but it's all right to look around and maybe even have two

or three professions." In retrospect, I hold these caring and loving mentors in admiration, deeply appreciating the impetus, support, inspiration, and freedom they provided as I followed my path to a vocation.

Having long ago made the choice to become an educator, I continue believing it to be a vocation of the highest calling. It is an honorable, esteemed pursuit and, other than good parenting, the most essential service one can contribute to humankind. Although this perspective might be challenged by many, for me it is a narrative truth, reflecting my personal experience. In my case, as I am sure for many others, educating others is not unlike a divine calling--a way to live out one's destiny. Acknowledging those who would disagree, I ask them at least to give the task of educating the respect I believe it deserves.

I ask them to remember one thing. As educators we hold in our hands, jointly with some other key societal institutions, the future of our civilization and perhaps the very survival of the human species. We act out this grave responsibility every day when we work with and for children and youth, preparing them to manage their own lives and guide us safely through the future. Hence the essence of the profound maxim, its origin lost in time, "Our children ***are*** our future."

An inquiry interest. With that afternoon of reflection in my sacred place, thus was the "seed planted" for what would become my dissertation project. The question, though, undoubtedly grew out of an ongoing interest, for in the past I'd been gripped with a fascination for why people come to be educators. I often wondered what forces in their personalities and life experiences were instrumental in shaping them for this vocation. In recognizing that each human being is unique, with his or her own complex and dynamic

interrelationships between personality and experience, I realized the intrinsic individuality of each case. All persons asked would have their own stories about why they came to be educators, and although there would be common threads or themes emerging from their stories, for the most part each would be different. The process of asking would require an introspective searching of myself, the asker, and an "entering in" to the individual realities of the participants--a collaborative venture in co-construction.

Having been heavily involved in the recruitment and selection of teachers, principals, and central office administrators for the last 15 years, I had many times asked the question, "Why did you become an educator?" However, the time permitted in an interview, or the space in a resume, provided for only a cursory overview. Also, the momentary interest was always more in how well they would do in the position for which they were being recruited. Accordingly, I had never engaged in a serious and contemplative analysis of why people choose to become educators.

Perhaps more important, neither had I deeply contemplated and sought to answer the same question about myself. As I had determined from that day of reverie in my sacred place, to reconstruct the narrative of my becoming would be a storied journey of discovery and fascination. My inner sense confirmed the veracity of this course, and I happily anticipated the beginning of the odyssey.

A Purpose for Inquiry

The purpose of this research was to explore introspectively and attribute meaning to those forces and influences of personality and experience in my life that were potent in shaping my becoming an educator. A primary goal of the study was to acquire a quintessentially intrinsic understanding of the story I am, and how the stories of my

personality attributes and life experiences sculpted me, leading to my current station as educator.

To achieve this primary goal, it was necessary to view my storied adventure alongside those of other educators. I could have told my own narrative in isolation, but as Conle (1996, pp. 310-311) stated, I felt that a deeper self-understanding would result by resonating my experiences with those of other educators. Also, as Glesne and Peshkin (1992, p. 104) cautioned, I wanted my story to be imaginable and verifiable by others, its worth not resting on some private sense of goodness or rightness, and not an illusion or fantasy having no reality outside of my own mind. In a well-composed memoir, resonant with the experiences of others, I felt these pitfalls could be avoided.

Further, because our realities are "socially" constructed, we can achieve a thorough understanding of ourselves only by comprehending those around us and having them comprehend us. As Coles (1989, pp. 92-105) espoused, the stories of other people, written or spoken, can lead us to a deeper knowing of ourselves. Hence, he advocated that an important part of our lives should be spent listening to the stories of others and reciprocating with our own tales. Personally, I find Cole's advice compelling and delightful, encouraging me further along an already well-loved trail.

As I hiked the hills of my youth, my eyes taught me that the biological concept of "binocular vision" is a fitting metaphor. This principle holds that we can gain clear vision of a phenomenon only from more than one perspective. To enhance the fit of the metaphor, we must expand the "binocular" concept from two perspectives to multiple ones. As Ball (cited in Glesne & Peshkin, 1992) claimed, " The landscape looks different depending on the particular hill you happen to choose to stand on" (p. 50).

Sandra Harding (D. J. Clandinin, personal communication, March 9, 1998) calls this notion *standpoint theory*. Indeed, the beaver pond of my sacred place takes on different qualities and evokes different feelings depending on the hill from which I view it.

Finally, the most accepted view of reality is a socially shared one, achieved by examination from numerous perspectives. Accordingly, I gathered the stories of other people, the participants, reflecting their perceptions of how they were influenced to become educators. Their stories were then held up beside mine, revealing both resonance and dissonance. As Conle (1996, p. 301) described, when the story of another reverberates within us and calls forth one of our own, in an echo like fashion, we pull that remembered story out of a previous context and place it into a new one. Consequently, I sought to understand my own story more completely; and in the process, I also understood the participant's stories and pathways.

The definitions. To bring life and meaning to my story, it is essential that there are shared understandings of the key ideas used in the exploration. I must share with my reader the "hills" from which I view this inquiry landscape. Within the purview of my study, the concepts of *educator*, *experience*, and *personality* are defined as follows.

An *educator* is anyone who teaches or administers in the process of educating young people, within the formal system of schooling provided by society. This includes teachers, principals, and administrators such as consultants, directors, and superintendents. For the last mentioned, in their life stories, they must have served as teachers before assuming their administrative posts and have provided support for the teaching process while serving as administrators.

An *experience* is a human phenomenon occurring as a consequence of a person attaching socially constructed meaning to an object, event, or situation and recognizing it as a personal reality. This recognized reality, the result of meaningful interaction with the landscape of life, then constitutes an experience. It is more than the continuously occurring, passively received, near insensibility of evanescent impression--that

> interaction of live creature and environing conditions . . . involved in the very process of living; . . . [rather] we have *an* experience when the material experienced runs its course to fulfillment. . . . Such an experience is a whole and carries with it its own individualizing quality and self-sufficiency. It is *an* experience. (Dewey, 1934, as cited in Bernstein, 1960, pp. 150-151).

This meaningful experience is in turn incorporated as personal knowledge, hence becoming part of the person's life story.

Personality is that collection of distinctive personal character traits, perceived individually by humans to be part of their internal, psychological "make-up." It is an accumulation of stories that people use in describing their individual cognitive, emotional, and intellectual qualities. Knowing one's own personality amounts to an experience with self. Although one's story of self may be influenced by other people, it is the perception of the individual that will be used to determine the nature of personality in this study. These stories of self are not necessarily fixed and may change throughout one's life narrative.

The assumptions. There were two basic assumptions stated at the onset of this research. One, it was assumed that all possible factors which may have influenced us to become educators could be included under the two broad definitions of experience and personality. Experience relates to all those factors external to the human organism, and

personality to those factors internal to it. Two, the constructivist paradigm, with its ontological and epistemological assumptions, formed the philosophical and methodological base from which this narrative inquiry was conducted.

The limitations. The storied data in this study consist of the socially constructed realities experienced by the participants, as interpreted by me, the researcher. As Margaret Atwood (as cited in Schulz, 1997) said, "it's impossible to say a thing exactly the way it was, because what you say can never be exact, you always have to leave something out, there are too many parts, sides, crosscurrents, nuances" (p. 9). Even though the participants validated the field texts, it is as Guba and Lincoln (1989) attested: "All human constructions are problematic. We cannot expect them to be ultimately true, or to remain constant for a long period of time" (p. 70).

Hence, one can never be positive to have captured the meaning of an experience as felt by another. The meanings that are captured and agreed upon as having verisimilitude are only "true" for the time being. What is true today may not be true tomorrow, and what was true at an earlier life stage may not be true today. One can only hope to capture that which is meaningful, real, and true for participants at the point of asking--a kind of narrative truth.

The boundaries. This study was confined to investigating those aspects of personality and life experience that were perceived by the participants and me to have been instrumental in influencing us to become educators. The participants in the study, five in number, were educators chosen because of their interest in narrative inquiry and their propensity to think and express themselves in story. Also, they consisted of a mix of female and male participants from different backgrounds and at different life and

career stages. Beyond these criteria, they were selected for ease of accessibility and willingness to participate.

The puzzling question. This research was guided by the following main question: *What manifestations of personality and experience appear to be influential in shaping individuals to become educators*? This question was intended to seek out a holistic and temporally cumulative response from the participants. I was interested in their perceptions, storied and restoried from the past up to the present, which would yield an understanding of what it means to them now. Relating to subcategories of the main question, the following guided and focussed the research.

1. What aspects of personality and life experience do I perceive as having been influential, up to the present, in shaping me to become an educator?

2. What aspects of personality and life experience do the participants perceive as having been influential, up to the present, in shaping them become educators?

3. What stories best portray those influential forces of personality and experience?

4. How do the stories come together into a broad narrative of patterns and themes encompassing the perceptions of all participants and myself?

5. How does the broad narrative contribute to the generation of theory through explanation of relationships among concepts derived from the themes?

6. How does the broad narrative and generated theory influence my practice as a superintendent currently and into the future?

The Significance

I believe this inquiry is important and valuable, not only for myself, but also for the greater community. To seek out a story of answers and understandings about one's

own life and the lives of others is indeed a worthy quest. In this inquiry I set out to gain a deeper understanding of myself and my relationship to my vocation and my world.

In my role as superintendent of schools, it is critical that I gain a thorough understanding of the people and situations around me. In order to do this well, I must first understand myself as completely as possible. With the assistance of the participants, this reflexive and introspective research assisted in that endeavour. The participants, similarly, have the same opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of themselves. It was a shared journey of contemplation for the participants and me.

A critic might question the value of such inquiry as a contribution to the body of knowledge on educational theory, research, and practice. However, as Clandinin and Connelly (1995) illustrated, "Educators of all persuasions, and wherever situated on an imagined continuum joining theoretical and practical activities, are enjoined to be, at one and the same time, theoretical and practical" (p. 6). Robinson (1996) added that practitioners always filter research recommendations through their own implicit and explicit theories, and stated: " It is no longer epistemologically sound to ignore the way practitioners theorize their own practice" (p. 428). In this intricate and dynamic interrelationship between the two, with theory informing practice and practice informing theory simultaneously, one could argue that it is of immense practical value for an educator to have a deep and penetrating self-awareness.

As a superintendent. In my leadership practice, this self-awareness directly affects school-system operation. My responsibilities are the educational welfare of 5,000 students; the work-place conditions of 500 people contributing to that educational welfare; the recommendation and implementation of a body of policy governing the

educational process, democratically derived for 25,000 voters through an elected school board; and the development and careful expenditure of a $30-million annual operating budget. The individual competence, confidence, and public credibility required of a superintendent demands a thorough and integrated knowing of self.

As an educator. Whatever one's station as an educator, the association with other people and the obligation to them place a burden of responsibility on the educator. Teachers must know and care for their students, each of whom is a precious life whose unfolding can be either fostered or impaired. This "precious life" will make a difference in the world, and for a few short moments in the grand scheme of things, the teacher has some influence on whether that difference will be positive or negative. Administrators of all types are faced with the same responsibility as they provide leadership and support for those "front line" providers and supporters. Coles (1989) said, "The ultimate test of a person's worth as a doctor or teacher or lawyer has to do not only with what he or she knows, but with how he or she behaves with another person, the patient, student, or client" (p. 119). If educators are to relate well with other people, they must first have a profound self-understanding.

In research fidelity. By seeking to know ourselves more completely, we meet Noddings' (1986) criteria for "fidelity" in educational research in that the puzzle has been chosen "in such a way that the knowledge gained will promote individual growth and maintain the caring community" (p. 506). The growth promoted individually is for the participants and me as we become more fully developed human beings, and for those we serve as we become better leaders and educators. For those reading this research, it is hoped they might be stimulated to know themselves better as educators and, as a result,

more effectively serve the people in their care. As Connelly and Clandinin (1990) stated, "What is at stake is less a matter of working theories and ideologies and more a question of the place of research in the improvement of practice and of how researchers and practitioners may productively relate to one another" (p. 12).

On the issue of researchers and participants relating productively to one another, Noddings (1986) spoke of the "ethic of caring" (p. 498). She urged researchers to model an attitude of sincere caring while engaged in their work, thus preserving the fidelity she advocated. From a broad societal perspective, Peck (1993, pp. 3-6) made a similar plea for people individually to adopt a set of deep-seated values that would be a foundation for responsible citizenship. He called for "civility, . . . [those] values encouraging interest and involvement in large social issues as opposed to mere self-centeredness, values necessary to maintain the health of democracy" (p. 4). He concluded, however, that our present society is marked by a decided absence of these values generally, with " an illness abroad in the land" (p. 3). Healing of the illness requires each person to adopt an attitude of genuine civility toward fellow human beings.

If part of the merit of this study is the achievement of increased self-understanding for improved practice, then of even greater merit was the accomplishment of the task in a caring way. When "I," as researcher and educator, and the participants, as educators, modelled a caring manner in the conduct this study, it was bound to "rub off" on some others around us. In this manner we continued that incremental work towards a "healing of the land." It *is* of great significance that this research was carried out in " an ethic of caring--an ethic that has fidelity to persons and the quality of relations at its heart" (Noddings, 1986, p. 498).

In generated theory. As Carter (1993) wrote, "A story, in other words, is a theory of something. What we tell and how we tell it is a revelation of what we believe" (p. 9). This revelation is, in fact, an explanation to the reader or listener of the particular belief in question. Accordingly, McKiel (1995, p. 64) concurred, stating that narrative inquiry, as a method, can serve both descriptive and explanatory purposes. Although this particular research is mainly descriptive, it does have an explanatory element. This element is provided in response to the caution Schulz (1997) raised when she said, "Describing a situation without providing a context for understanding the whole is meaningless" (p. 140). Hence, through theory generation I enhanced that context for a more complete understanding of the whole.

Using Polkinghorne's (1988, pp. 161-170) definition, the study is descriptive in that it consists of an account of human experiences connected to form a unified narrative, the experiences being interpreted to understand their meaning, significance, and value. The explanatory element lies in the act of generating theory, making clear the relationship between constructs emerging from the description. As such, I engaged in what LeGuin (1989) described as a "manoeuvre of rationalization--rendering sensible-seeming something" (p. 40) that otherwise might not seem fully sensible. I have done this by deriving a theory that explains those influences which led us to become educators.

Although Coles (1989, p. 22) suggested that "what ought to be interesting . . . is the unfolding of a lived life rather than the confirmation such a chronicle provides for some theory," perhaps he would have been more amenable to theory emerging from the "unfolding of that lived life," rather than being confirmed by it. In this study, theory was generated as Blase and Roberts (1994, p. 69) described, through an inductive and

interpretive process, leading from data analysis to the formation of data categories, to emergent patterns or themes, to the conceptual labelling of themes, and finally to an explanation of relationships among the concepts, hence informing a theoretical understanding--all accomplished within the context of a holistic narrative research text.

The end product is similar to what Strauss and Corbin (1994) described as "grounded theory . . . [which] evolves during actual research" (p. 273); however, the process employed was obviously not orthodox grounded theory methodology. This generated theory is the by-product of a descriptive narrative inquiry. After all is said and done, it is another tool to help us more fully "make sense" of the findings.

In terms of research and theory, this type of study contributes two things. First, it provides for the generation of emergent theory in the area of vocational or career motivation. Although an in-depth qualitative study such as this, with a small purposive selection of participants, cannot produce generalizable theory, it may, through transferability, have relevance for other educators. As Van Manen (1984, p. 51) stated, in telling our own story of lived experience, we know that our experiences are also the possible experiences of others. Weick (1996) added, "The more explicit, dense, and concrete my description, paradoxically, the more resonance there is with the human condition in general. To understand one group well is to understand many almost as well" (p. 576). In addition to educators generally, this research may have special relevance for vocational guidance counselors and administrators of human resource recruitment and selection.

Second, it provides an educative model for others to follow on the path to deeper self-discovery. I, the researcher, was also thus able to fulfill a necessary requirement of

my role. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) highlighted the need for researchers to explore their own subjectivity, thus managing the impact of "self" on the research. They concluded:

> It may represent the beginning of understanding, a necessary condition on the way to making the researcher's biases explicit and to grasping the place of subjectivity in research. Although we cannot absolutely specify what the sufficient conditions are for this to occur, we believe that the conditions relate to a personal encounter with self in the course of research. Aware that there is something to seek, to uncover, and to understand about yourself, you are ready to be informed through the research experience. (pp. 100-101)

Although there are many means for people to gain a deeper understanding of themselves, few are of a rigorous research design which can be self-administered. This model has provided a rigorous, self-administered design to facilitate the "personal encounter with self in the course of research" (p. 101).

The Becoming

On that day when I reminisced my way back to the old homestead through tranquil groves and meadows, restorying my becoming as I went, I did not recognize that I was simultaneously affecting my continued becoming. In this study, I, the researcher, along with the participants, set out on a journey to deepen our self-understanding through an exploration of the factors that influenced us to become educators. I did not anticipate that as we did this, we would be adding new colors, new brush strokes, and new textures to that ever-evolving canvas of our present and future.

Our journey would be an historical sojourn "down memory lane" revisiting and restorying personal characteristics, realities we have experienced, and the socially constructed meanings we attributed to them. Bateson (1989) described such a sojourn when she alluded to our lives as "works of art, still incomplete, . . . parables in process,

the living metaphors with which we describe the world" (p. 18). She described the living and re-living experience: "the composition of our lives . . . worked by improvisation, discovering the shape of our creation along the way, rather than pursuing a vision already defined" (p. 1).

As the beaver glides back and forth through the earthen brown waters of the pond, carrying branches, sticks, and mud, skillfully and carefully melding them within the evolving construction plan, so we effect our becoming. From within our landscapes, our environments, we draw on the resources that are available, taking advantage of the plentitude and constructing our lives. In this manner we become the story that we are and the story we will become. It is a complex, integrated, and holistic process, one that unfolds naturally and harmoniously if we are in tune with the universe--as the beaver is.

CHAPTER II

The Literature Tells a Story

I have taught thee in the way of wisdom.
I have led thee in right paths.
--Prov. 4:11, *King James Version*

Of Elder's Wisdom

There is a redolence, a pleasantly fragrant aroma of well-burned Dutch pipe tobacco wafting through the small, cozy living room. The bluish wisps of smoke curl and rise as he gently draws occasional puffs on his straight briar pipe. He is comfortably planted in the old flaxen-coloured rocking chair, seeming one with it, both of them well worn, belonging together. As he slowly rocks, the chair quietly squeaks, an audible reminder of his arthritic twinges left over from many years of physical labour. The tartan houseslippers, gray woollen socks, leaden trousers, and faded plaid shirt seem held together by his burgundy suspenders. Beneath his close-cropped ashen hair, still streaked by the dusky remnants of youth, sparkle those bespectacled sapphire eyes, yet youthful in their lively twinkle. His clean-shaven face of weathered wrinkles beams and smiles out in pleasure at the presence of his two young grandsons.

It is Saturday morning, and as a culmination of the many delights in the weekly "trip to town," it is now time to visit Grandpa. Having already stormed the candy counters and comic book racks of the local merchants, quickly exhausting our weekly "allowance," and probably their patience, my brother and I have walked "up to the house." It is a private time here because Grandma, Mom, and Dad are still downtown, busy with their shopping. We sit in the two kitchen chairs he has moved in and carefully

placed in front of his rocking chair. We each nurse and savour the steaming cup of cordiality he has lovingly prepared for us. This magical concoction of instant coffee, canned milk, and white sugar is a special gift from Grandpa, one normally forbidden in other circumstances, for it is storytime.

There was always an essence of warmth, caring, belonging, and love filling this storytime room. Grandpa would begin by passing the time of day and asking a few questions about our activities during the past week. After receiving our demure responses with sincere interest, he would start weaving them into his stories. A vestigial hint of a long extinct Slavic accent remained in his happy voice as he smiled and laughed, regularly tilting his head and gesturing with arms and hands. Through all of this his eyes would twinkle, the rocker would squeak, and the firmly held pipe would trace the smoky paths of his gesticulation.

As my brother and I listened with pleasure and wide-eyed anticipation, he would tell of days long ago, of his youthful exploits, adventures, learnings, tragedies, hopes, and comedies. His narration was always interspersed with questions to us, reflecting on our present and how the learnings of his past might help guide us into our futures. These storied treasures filled my being, and as time eroded specific recall, their safe storage in that tacit receptacle allowed them to continue as guides to my living. These treasures were wisdom, and he, Grandpa, was a fount of wisdom--an elder of the land.

As my grandfather was a source of wisdom, so the literature is also a source of wisdom--to be treated as an elder of the land. If we interpret it well, it too is a reservoir of storied treasures to help us make sense of our beings and guide our living. This research, my journey of self-discovery, required an acquisition of further insights from

the literature domains of self-understanding, personality characteristics, personal experience, memory role, and vocational path motivation. To make the journey complete, I felt it necessary to have the literature tell its story of these domains, thus weighing "my thoughts [as researcher] . . . against the writings of others" (Schulz, 1997, p. 8).

As my grandfather imparted wisdom in his own unique voice, so I have allowed the literature to tell a story in its own voice, speaking the language of scholarly treatise. It tells by using description and argument, and in this fashion provides a background in support of the research. The "text types" of description and argument contribute to the overall unity of my research narrative. As Chatman (1990, pp. 8-10) espoused, no text type is intrinsically privileged; rather, they "are at each other's service" (p. 8). He concluded, "Narrators of novels routinely digress to describe or argue, describers to narrate or argue, and arguers to narrate or describe" (p. 10). Hence, the literature speaks, telling its own story as an offering to the larger story.

This review draws on an array of traditions, philosophical backgrounds, and theoretical perspectives, including literature from both the constructivist and positivist paradigms. The variety is intentionally presented in an effort to respect the holistic nature of our beings and our world. With literature from such an assortment of traditions, we are more likely to find resonance and dissonance with our own experiences. I trust, in some small or large way, that every theoretical position and research finding has relevance for the participants and me in our own stories. It comes to us as wisdom from an elder.

Of Self-Understanding

It is a truism to suggest that people must continue to grow psychologically and spiritually if they are to negotiate successfully the vagaries of our turbulent world. Morgan (1993) captured the essence of this turbulence:

> Many people are struggling in their attempts to deal with the new world realities, particularly as they affect the domain of organization and management. Everywhere we look, traditional structures are being reshaped or falling down. Powerful nation-states are fragmenting. Once-successful companies are finding that sure-hit formulas no longer work. People, and even whole communities, are finding the world moving beneath their feet as traditional markets, industries, and sources of employment disappear under the impact of new information technologies and a restructuring of the world economy. (p. xxvii)

The means of coping with this environmental turbulence should begin with a personal growth process of sedulous introspection aimed at profound self-understanding.

Covey (1989) advanced the notion that many people "have found themselves struggling with an inner hunger, a deep need for personal congruency and effectiveness and for healthy, growing relationships with other people" (p.15). Referring to women in particular, Bateson (1989) spoke of the "search in ambiguity for her own kind of integrity, learning to adapt and improvise in a culture in which we could only partly be at home" (p. 13). Coles (1989) concurred and added: As people seek that which is missing from their personal lives, this inner hunger often emerges as a theme of "mild restlessness or apprehensiveness occasionally turning into gnawing discontent" (p. 139). He concluded that a failure to fulfill this inner hunger in a healthy manner often leads to self-defeating and self-destructive behaviours.

Peck (1978, pp. 44-46) took this vein of thinking further, suggesting that one must be dedicated to truth in order to achieve this growth and happiness. He continued, stating

that "truth is reality" (p. 44) and advocated that one seek out this reality as an equipping to deal with the world. One may extrapolate further, that step one in the process is self-discovery and that it should be the aim of all humanity. Coles (1989, p. 209) agreed, relating the urgings of Dr. Wm. C. Williams that one should engage in an intense, searching self-scrutiny, not to become vain and condescending, but rather to become a more humane human being.

Further, Peck (1978, pp. 44-46) acknowledged that this "truth . . . reality" (p. 44) is socially constructed and must be forged in the crucible of loquacious dialectic. It thus requires dialogue and conversation both with self, internally, and with others, interpersonally. He used metaphor, stating, "Our view of reality is like a map with which to negotiate the terrain of life" (p. 44), and suggested that one must pay constant scrutiny to revising that map. Revisions must be in response to and in accordance with the perpetual, all-pervasive universal flux, or as Bateson (1989) coined, "the fluidity and discontinuity . . . central to the way we live" (p. 13). Peck concluded that "transference, . . . the active clinging to an outmoded view of reality, is the basis for much mental illness"(p. 46) and encouraged dedication to emergent reality at all costs.

Morgan (1997, pp. 215-220) advanced a similar notion when he said, "Human beings have a knack for getting trapped in webs of their own creation" (p. 215). He explained that people often cling to the reality they know, resisting Bateson's "fluidity and discontinuity." The result is the creation of a personal "psychic prison" (p. 215) in which people are imprisoned by their own conscious and unconscious processes. Schein (1996, p. 236) explained that, as a culture, our actions are guided by a shared set of implicit assumptions that most members never question, taking them for granted. He

added, "The members of a culture are not even aware of their own culture until they encounter a different one" (p. 236). As well as people being resistant, one could conclude that people are innocently blinded by their own socialization.

In their research on administrator problem solving, Leithwood, Steinbach, and Raun (1993, pp. 372-373) found that values play a pervasive role, serving as perceptual screens which limit people to seeing and hearing only those things they want to. As Plager (1994) concluded, "We are so culturally and socially embedded in familiarity with our practices and skills that we lose sight of our being from existing within this familiarity" (p. 65). Heidegger (as cited in Plager, 1994, p.65) advocated hermeneutic phenomenology as a philosophical methodology to uncover the meaning of our being as humans. However, as Peck (1978) discussed, it seems that any ambitious and dedicated self-seeking is a "road less travelled" (p. 312). It would seem that there is indeed a "psychic prison" awaiting and welcoming the complacent.

As Morgan (1997) stated, some seek emancipation by pursuing objective knowledge, and others "seek it in forms of self-understanding that show how in encounters with the external world, people are really meeting hidden dimensions of themselves" (p. 220). He added that "if one really wants to understand one's environment one must begin by understanding oneself" (p. 258). In their research on leadership, Bolman and Deal (1994) found the "pursuing of self- knowledge" (p. 85) a fundamentally required quality. They advised that this quality is dependent upon leaders being self-reflective, gaining insights through getting to "know themselves, their strengths, limitations, and inner feelings" (p. 92).

Steichen (1994, pp. 113-115) advocated searching for oneself through direct experience with nature, hence being stimulated to "remember our true nature and remember nature's laws" (p. 113). She contended that these natures, now forgotten, were once known by humankind and thus retrievable. She added:

> our minds can lie to us, but our bodies do not lie. The inner intelligence of our bodies mirrors the wisdom of the universe. Our bodies are a hologram of the universe, in whose cells are recorded the memory of the whole universe and its mechanics of operation. Our physical bodies must be near to the Earth to feel her wisdom, and our minds must be quiet, so that they can integrate with heart and spirit (p. 115).

As Luther Standing Bear (as cited in Steichen, 1994), a Lakota Sioux chief said, "That is why the old Indian sits upon the Earth instead of propping himself up and away from its life giving forces; . . . to sit or lie upon the ground is to be able to think more clearly and feel more keenly" (p. 114). Lock (1996) concluded that the study of our world and inner selves never stops: "When you study your inner self . . . you begin to discover what interests you, what motivates you and energizes you, what your strengths and weaknesses are, and what is really most important to you" (p. 68).

Kerby (1991, pp. 3-8) provided a holistic integration of the foregoing notions, stating that our loquacious exchanges lead to narratives, which "are a primary embodiment of our understanding of the world, of experience, and ultimately of ourselves" (p. 3). He said the unifying action of narration gives meaning to the temporal expanses in our lives. Hence, one's self-understanding, mediated primarily through language, is especially influenced by the narrative nature of one's self-knowledge. Self-understanding and self-identity therefore depend upon one's personal narrative. As Conle (1996, p. 320) said, storytelling and the resonance between storied experiences

enhances self -understanding. The self is "inseparable from the narrative or life story it constructs for itself or otherwise inherits" (p. 6). Kerby thus concluded that story telling is the fundamental way in which human events are understood, narration providing us a unified, holistic sense of person and self-identity.

As stated earlier, one of the goals of this study was for the participants and me to gain a deeper personal understanding of ourselves. The literature seemed to support and attribute importance to such an endeavour, for the well-being of the individual and society.

Of Personality Characteristics

The study of personality has as its goal the understanding of human motivation and behaviour. Although there is a plethora of definitions for personality, Ryckman (1982) acknowledged some basic agreement among investigators that it is a hypothetical construct or abstraction "that refers to an internal mediating state of the individual" (p. 4). Thus, it refers to our thoughts, feelings, motivations, and behaviours as we respond to various environmental situations, or as Ryckman (1982) attributed to Erich Fromm, our "character orientations" (p. 123). Consequently, it follows that one's character orientation will be key as an influencer of vocational choice.

The extant theories of personality and its development are almost as numerous as the definitions. From a panoramic viewpoint, these theories are placed along a continuum, in dialectical tension, between two opposite polarities. Ryckman (1982) confirmed: "These perspectives range from Sheldon's almost total emphasis on the biological or inherited determinants of personality to Rotter's stress on the ways in which social learning experiences affect behavior" (p. 4). Thus he captured the root of the old

high-school psychology debate, as to whether personality derives from heredity or environment. He cautioned, however, "that the range of behavior under consideration is so great, and the kinds of phenomena examined are so complex that no investigator, no matter how knowledgeable or creative, can study every aspect of them" (p. 4).

For the point of this research, it matters not whether one's personality is caused by heredity or environment; rather, what matters is the adoption of a theory that has meaning for me, the researcher. Further, the general concept of contingency theory informs us that there is a multiplicity of complex and dynamically interrelated causal factors for any phenomenon, personality included. In explaining contingency theories, Schein (1980) stated,

> There are no simple generalizations about human behavior in organizations . . . The important point to recognize about these theories is that they represent progress in understanding reality, a reality that social scientists are discovering derives from the interplay of cultural, economic, organizational, and technological forces (pp. 48-49).

To Schein's list, it might be appropriate to add psychological and spiritual forces as well. Therefore, to strive for shared reality, in the context of this study, a theory is required that will elucidate the connections between personality attributes, personal experience, and vocational path motivation.

When one contemplates theories of psychology, personality, and behaviour, Sigmund Freud usually comes to mind; however, for me the assumptions of Carl Jung are more consistent with my personal ontology. Morgan (1997) captured the essence of their differences:

> whereas Freud was preoccupied with the demands that the body, as carrier of the psyche, placed on the unconscious, Jung cut loose from this constraint, viewing the psyche as part of a universal and transcendental

> reality; . . . hence Jung's holistic view of the psyche as a universal phenomenon . . . linking mind to mind and mind to nature (p. 239).

Consistent with Jung's view, the *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (Brown, 1993) defined our psyche, as "soul, spirit and mind" (p. 2400), including what we commonly think of as personality or character.

Ryckman (1982, pp. 64-65) cited Jung's postulation that deep within our psyche lies the

> collective unconscious . . . a deposit of world-processes embedded in the structure of the brain and the sympathetic nervous system . . . [which] constitutes, in its totality, a sort of timeless and eternal world-image which counterbalances our conscious momentary picture of the world (p. 65).

He referred to Jung's "collective unconscious" as a "storehouse of latent memories of our human and prehuman ancestry" (p. 65) and the source of our instinct and intuition. Jung (1960, pp. 114-115) explained how one's conscious behaviors are affected, in that the "collective unconscious conditions . . . act as regulators and stimulators of creative fantasy-activity and call forth corresponding formations by availing themselves of the existing conscious material" (p. 114). He concluded that the resulting human experience has " a distinctly numinous character which can only be described as 'spiritual,' if 'magical' is too strong a word" (p. 115). The idea that we are able to draw on a stream of collective "cosmic" consciousness, through instinctual and intuitive processes, has profound ramifications for attributing meaning to our encounters with the world and making vocational selections.

Ryckman (1982, pp. 62-72) illustrated that the conscious functioning of the Jungian personality is a complex, esoteric interplay among the components: *ego*, *persona*, and *unconscious*. This functioning is constantly influenced by the archetypal

elements of the unconscious: the personal unconscious; the shadow; the animus-anima; and, of course, the collective unconscious described earlier. As he related, "Through the psyche, energy flows continuously in various directions from consciousness to unconsciousness and back and from inner to outer reality and back" (p. 62).

Jung (1960, pp. 110-120) described the linkages between the collective unconscious and the conscious as "archetypes . . . the existence of archaic vestiges and primitive modes of functioning in . . . patterns of behavior" (pp. 110-111). Morgan (1997, pp. 239-241) clarified, explaining archetypes as patterns that structure our thought, give order to the world, shape our understandings, and shape the details of our reality. He noted archetypes as "recurring themes of thought and experience that seem to have universal significance. For example, . . . mythology and literature are dominated by a small number of basic themes--apocalyptic, demonic, romantic, tragic, comic, and ironic" (p. 241). Also, Spears (1994) alluded to emerging evidence that the "servant leader" (p. 164) theme is a previously unidentified Jungian archetype. Simply put, archetypes influence the way we view the world and shape our interaction with it.

For the purposes of this discourse, we will forego a more detailed analysis of the personality components and their dynamic interactions and move directly to the Jungian personality types. Jung (1960) organized his "psychological types" (p. 40) or character orientations along a continuum of "extraversion and introversion" (p. 40). He pointed out that people are not purely extraverted or introverted; rather, they each have complex variations of both aspects in their personalities. Ryckman (1982) cited Jung in describing the types as follows:

> *Extraversion* refers to an outgoing, candid, and accommodating nature that adapts easily to a given situation, quickly forms attachments, and,

> setting aside any possible misgivings, often ventures forth with careless confidence into an unknown situation.
> *Introversion*, in contrast, signifies a hesitant, reflective, retiring nature that keeps itself to itself, shrinks from objects, is always slightly on the defensive, and prefers to hide behind mistrustful scrutiny. (p. 72)

He concluded that although people have elements of each type within their personalities, one is dominant, residing wholly within the conscious, whereas the other is a gentle influencer, residing in the personal subconscious.

Ryckman (1982, pp. 77-79), Morgan (1997, p. 242), and Lock (1996, pp. 84-85) cited research evidence that the Jungian personality typology has applications in analyzing managerial and decision-making styles, the use and direction of human energy in organizations, performing various mental tasks, and occupational interests. The instrument commonly used for these analyses is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). This tool, based on Jungian theory, helps people see why certain vocational choices may better suit their personalities and "be of greater interest that others" (Lock, 1996, p. 84).

Von Fange (1961, pp. 105-110), using the MBTI in a quantitative analysis of 1,084 educators, found that personality type was related to the initial choice of teaching as a profession. Although a range of personality orientations were revealed among the subjects, he found that the majority of males were of the "extraversion--sensing--thinking--judging" orientation, and the majority of females were of the "extraversion--sensing--feeling--judging" orientation. There was also a strong showing from females of the "extraversion --intuition--feeling--perceiving" orientation.

As stated earlier, a main assumption of this study was that personality attributes or character orientations were key determiners in my path to becoming an educator. The

literature clearly supported this thesis and thus lent credence to the object of this study. Also, contributing to the integrated holism desired in this research enterprise, the Jungian perspective was more in keeping with my personal orientation or world view.

Of Personal Experience

Whereas personality attributes play a primary role in shaping one's vocational choice, it can also be argued that personal experience must share equally in that primacy. As Schein (1978, p. 24; 1980, p.40) indicated, no matter what one's biological heredity, the experiences of one's upbringing and sociocultural context has tremendous effect on the development of needs, motives, talents, attitudes, and values. Undoubtedly, the experiences we have as we interact with the landscape of life are sculptors that form and mould us. However, within each individual there is a unique dialectical tension balancing the relationship between personality and experience as influencers of behaviour. Again, as discussed in the section on personality, the situational complexities of contingency theory apply to the relationship between experience and personality.

As Scheffler (1995) pointed out, in reflecting on Dewey's insights: "the mind is not initially passive, waiting to be activated by experience; . . . rather the mind is active from the very beginning, and experience is a matter of the consequences incurred by such activity" (p.30). Eisner (1988, p. 15) added that all knowledge is rooted in experience and requires only a form for its representation. From these perspectives, one can see the close linkages and interplay between personality and experience; in fact, it becomes difficult to separate them, for personality as perceived by the individual is really just an experience with self. As Kerby (1991, p.16) said, experience is the domain in "which all

objectivities make their appearance. . . .Experience is at once part and whole; . . . there is nothing but experience" (p. 16). All experience is a part of the narrative unity of life.

Clandinin and Connelly (1994, pp. 4-7) marveled at the universality of the word *experience* in the educational discourse and concluded that experience is a manifestation of the relationship between people, their environment, and themselves. Similarly, Schein (1980, pp. 40-42) postulated that as people live, they are always operating and interacting in some kind of situational context. The meanings they ascribe to the events resulting from this operative interaction are defined by the collective perceptions, assumptions, and expectations they hold relative to that situation.

One can conclude that the meanings an individual constructs for these events are "experiences." Ewing (1993) said, "We are the sum of our lived experiences and the meanings we attach to those lived experiences" (p. 8). Clandinin and Connelly(1994) added, "Stories are the closest we can come to experience as we and others tell of our experience; . . . experience is the stories people live" (p. 415). As Conle (1996, p. 313) concluded, a story is a sense-making tool. From a research perspective, Clandinin and Connelly concluded that "experience is, therefore, the starting point and key term for all social sciences inquiry" (p. 414).

To determine the influence of experience on people, Conle (1996, pp. 297-309) studied the process of four preservice teachers sharing their experiential narratives. She found that they would "subconsciously create metaphorical correspondences between two sets of narrativized experiences [two stories]" (p. 297). In this process a participant would listen to the story of another and as a result find herself reminded of one of her own stories. There would always be some linking element between the two stories.

These links tended to be emotional ones, as Dewey (as cited in Conle, 1996) suggested, "the emotional cement holding experiences together (p.307).

Conle (1996) called this process resonance, "a way of seeing one experience in terms of another. . . . When a story reverberates within us and calls forth another in an echo like fashion, we pull that remembered story out of a previous context and place it into a new one" (pp. 299-301). One story would colour another, hence changing the understanding previously held for the latter. As these stories come together they interact with each other, reshaping themselves and the knowledge embedded in them.

Clandinin and Connelly (1995) contended that an educator's "knowledge is that body of convictions and meaning, conscious or unconscious, that have arisen from experience (intimate, social, and traditional) and that are expressed in a person's practice" (p. 7). Conle (1996) borrowed from Connelly and Clandinin the phrase "personal practical knowledge" (p. 300) to describe the tacit knowledge that people gain through prior experience. Tacit knowledge is that implicitly held information, unspoken, inherent, and practical, which guides human behaviour. "It is part of our personal and cultural history and takes on what Polanyi called a subsidiary character" (Conle, 1996, p. 316). All knowledge, both implicit and explicit, is a product of our experiences.

Scheffler (1995, pp. 32-35) expressed Dewey's contention that education must be a process of creating and providing for experiences to foster the development of this implicit and explicit knowledge. Dewey (1938; as cited in Boydston & Levine, 1988) expounded that human growth and self-development are the result of accumulating educative experiences. He stated:

> Every genuine experience has an active side which changes in some degree the objective conditions under which experiences are had. The

> difference between civilization and savagery . . . is found in the degree in which previous experiences have changed the objective conditions under which subsequent experiences take place. (p. 22)

Dewey felt that in order to accomplish its ends both for the individual and society, education must be based upon the actual life experiences of the individual (p. 61). As Scheffler (p. 34) put it, Dewey's main argument was that it is only through experience that a child is able to discover the personal aptitudes required for a proper choice of vocation to be made later in life.

In her research on student teachers' experiences, Tardif (1984) found that "students come to a teacher education program with a definition of the situation based on their personal experience as a student and on what others have said about teaching" (p.174). She studied four participants to gain a thick description and interpretation of the process of becoming a teacher, from a university practicum student viewpoint. She revealed:

> The beliefs of the participants . . . provide evidence of the influence of one's schooling experiences. Their views on teaching and learning have been patterned by what they have known and experienced. It would appear therefore that many of the core beliefs that the participants had about "teaching" were formed as a result of the interpretations they made of their experiences as students. Much of their future actions as teachers were constructed on the basis of a definition of the situation constituted by the interaction of past experiences with the present demands of the practicum situation. (pp. 175-176)

Ewing (1993, p. 18) showed similar results in research designed to explore the essence of the "call" in teaching. In an ethnographic narrative study with strong phenomenological overtones, he interacted with six participants. He determined, as a by-product of his main data, that past experience had influenced them: "Many teachers recalled their childhood experiences as a way of identifying their first affirmation of

entering the teaching profession" (p. 67). The following excerpts reveal the "past experience" theme:

> My first sense of wanting to teach was reflected in my interest as a young child in reading and a constant appetite to learn more about my environment. . . . I enjoyed exploration, . . . the anticipation of each new skill or piece of knowledge that became part of my greater experience. (p. 21)

> I enjoyed helping children younger that myself. I assisted a teacher in Sunday School. I also was a teacher assistant and teacher in summer programs at churches. Those experiences in junior high were confirming of my desire to teach. (pp. 38-39)

Overall, the general literature and these research findings have shown that personal experience is a key determinant in one's life choices. As a theoretical conceptualization, this is perhaps a self-evident truth that could just as easily have been determined by "common sense." Indeed, previous life experience plays a poignant role in shaping educators for their vocation.

Of Vocational Path Motivation

The previous two sections dealt with the general roles that personality and personal experience may play in shaping vocational choice. In this section we look specifically at the literature on vocational path motivation to investigate theory and factors influencing people to choose the vocations they do.

In this work I have chosen to identify the educator's role as a "vocation." Super and Bohn (1970, pp. 113-114) provided the theoretical base for Lock (1996, p. 1), who, in describing the general concept of work role, used the terms *career*, *occupation*, and *job*, distinguishing between them as follows:

> A career is generally thought of as a sequence of a person's work experiences over time. . . . The broadest concept of the three, . . . an occupation, is one's *vocation* [emphasis added], business, calling,

> profession, or trade. . . . A job is a position of employment within an occupation. . . . Thus, a career spans a period of time that may involve one occupation or several, in which a person can hold a series of jobs. (p. 1)

Although I do not dispute Lock's nomenclature system, my reason for choosing the word *vocation* is captured by the following explanation, which illustrates the deep meaning I feel for my life's work.

Howard and Scheffler (1995, pp. 9-23) and Peck (1993, pp. 61-62) described the concept of "vocation," as being derived from the Latin *vocatio/vocare* which literally means " a divine calling." They expanded, suggesting that, even in a secular sense, vocation is some notably worthy occupation or career for which one has a special aptitude and aspiration. They explained that the careful choosing of a vocation, potentially one's life work, is of the highest educational importance. They added that one person's vocation may be another's onerous labour, but exclaimed, "Happy are those whose job is also their vocation!" (p. 10). Scheffler (1995) provided an appropriate conclusion: "To find out what one is fitted to do and to secure an opportunity to do it is the key to happiness" (p. 33).

Underlying the notion of vocational path motivation is the more basic concept of motivation generally. As is the case for definitions and theories of personality, there is also a plethora of cognitive motivation theories, none of which is able to explain all the intricacies of human motivation in its own right (Hoy & Miskel, 1996, p. 99). Lock (1996, pp. 153-154) defined motivation as an internal process that compels one to act in a purposeful way. This is an appropriate definition; however, it must be acknowledged that the factors influencing people to act are multiple, complex, and dynamically

interrelated. Schein (1980) agreed, stating that a single theory explains human behaviour "some of the time, . . . but every time we attempt to generalize, we find that other, more important phenomena seem to be at work that vitiate the proposed theory" (p. 39). Hoy and Miskel stated a basic postulate that "most contemporary theories of motivation hold that the major determinants of human behavior are concepts such as beliefs, needs, perceived efficacy, attributions, expectations, goals, and anticipations that individuals have about future events" (pp. 98-99).

As Lock (1996. p. 152) stated with respect to a career or vocational goal, there is usually some energy, drive, persistence, or "motivation" to make the choices we do. In acknowledging debate about the true freedom an individual really has to make choices, given the domination and marginalization that occurs, he theorized that there are three approaches available for choosing a vocational path. Relating closely to motivation, these approaches are (a) the "rational systematic," emphasizing that one can take charge of one's life by using reason and logic; (b) the "sociocultural determinant," emphasizing that one is the victim of forces beyond one's control; and (c) the "accidental," where one depends on chance (pp. 3-4).

More specifically, in the domain of vocational motivation there is theory that will be reviewed in greater detail. Schein (1980) said, "Theories of occupational choice have attempted to link such choice to more basic human motives or needs but have encountered the same difficulties in supporting their hypotheses as other motivation theories" (p. 79). Again, the fluidity and complexity of the behavioral determinants make it impossible to generalize any theory to all contexts. Any theory relevant to this

research would have to provide information on peoples' prevocation deliberations, predicting vocational choice based on personality types or socialization experiences.

Schein (1978, pp. 20-23) described various life and career development stages, with the complexities and uncertainties that people experience in passing through them. He identified three life cycles, the biosocial, career, and family, each with its attendant development stages. The biosocial cycle stages are adolescence, crisis of the 30s, mid-life crisis, and old-age crisis. The work and career cycle stages are entry into career, gaining tenure, and retirement. The family or procreation cycle stages are marriage, having children, and children growing up. All three cycles and nine stages interact dynamically, with their interrelationships and effects depending on the temporal location in a person's life.

Lock (1996, pp. 14-17) and Schein (1980, pp. 82-83) described a vocational development theory based on life development stages, which has relevance for this study because it can relate to both personality and experience through the human, prevocational development period. It is Super's development theory, revised by

> Super and Bohn (1970) who postulate that career development is essentially a process of synthesis of the person's self-concept with the [ever-changing] realities of the external environment. A basic underlying motive driving this process is the *implementation of the self-concept*" (Schein, 1980, p. 82).

Lock (1996) explained, "Super conceives of vocational development as one part of your total growth. Like social, emotional, and intellectual development, vocational development starts early in life. Life is divided into childhood, adolescent, and adult stages" (p. 15).

Super and Bohn (1970, pp. 136-141) described their five "vocational life stages" as follows. The growth stage (birth to age 14), a time of investigation, is characterized by the development of self-concept through identification with key people in the family and school. The exploration stage (age 15 to 24), a time of reality testing, is characterized by occupational exploration at school, role tryouts, and self-examination, through school, leisure activities, part-time jobs, and initial career attempts. The establishment stage (age 25 to 44) is characterized by an effort to make a permanent place in an appropriate field. It is a time of early trial and experiment, attempting to implement self-concept through career selection, leading to career installation. The maintenance stage (age 45 to 64), a time of implementing and modifying self-concept, is characterized by those middle career years of having made a place in the world of work and attempting to hold it. The decline stage (age 65 and on), a time of readjusting self-concept after retirement, is characterized by the erosion of physical and mental capacities and the seeking of new roles. Throughout these stages, the individual is creating and revising a continually evolving self-concept.

Given that the Jungian personality theory is featured in this study, it is fitting that a brief description be provided of its matching vocational interest inventory, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). Lock (1996, p. 71) explained that the instrument measures interests, not abilities, with an interest being defined as whatever arouses one's attention, curiosity, or involvement. The instrument uses four dimensions of opposite polarities from which to classify interest types. These are extraversion--introversion, sensing--intuition, thinking--feeling, and judging--perceiving (p. 83). He identified the dimensions as attitudes and orientations that we have toward people, careers, and life in

general, all constituting an important part of our conscious personalities. In addition to providing insight into vocational interests, the MBTI also shows why certain vocations may be of greater interest than others. Also, as Von Fange (1961, p. 169) found in an interview with Carl Jung, the entire Jungian personality theory was developed with the intention that people use it to understand themselves and their fellow human beings better. The MBTI certainly provides for fulfillment of this intent.

In concluding the literature review on vocational path motivation, it is fitting to examine some research regarding why people choose to become educators. Earlier in this work some findings were presented that identified various personal experiences and personality orientations as motivators for choosing the vocation. As Weber and Mitchell (1995) indicated, "There is a growing recognition that becoming a teacher begins long before people ever enter a Faculty of Education" (p. 5). The ensuing findings reveal some vocational path motivators relating to experience and personality, that influenced educators' choices.

Newman (1998, pp. 4-5) reported cumulative results of a longitudinal study on the motives of prospective teachers and found the following themes:

1. Students: "I love children," "I like working with young people," "I want to help students," "I believe I can make a difference in their lives."

2. Academics: "I enjoy [a particular subject]," "I love learning."

3. Job advantages: "I like having my summers off," "My hours as a teacher will match my children's hours in school," "Teaching is a good job for people on their way to something else."

4. Social value: "Teaching is society's most important job," "I can improve society by teaching."

5. Influence of other teachers: "Some of my teachers helped me so much, they made me want to teach," "Some of my teachers hurt me so much, they made me want to teach" (pp. 4-5).

Parkay and Hardcastle Stanford (1995, pp. 4-7), in summarizing the results of an American national survey of teachers, found similar motivation themes:

1. Love of teaching, including love of students, love of subject area, love of the teaching-learning process, and love of the teaching life;

2. Influence of other teachers, mainly recollections of good teachers experienced while a grade school student; and

3. Desire to serve, an altruistic orientation.

The previous sections have made it clear that there is a complex mixture of both personality and experience factors that influence vocational path motivation. Paproski (1990 p. 159-169) illustrated this in his research to determine the opinions of Native and non-Native high school students on factors influencing their career decision making. First, he found no significant difference between the opinions of Native and non-Native students. Second, he found that both groups reported being most influenced by self-expectations, abilities, interests and attitudes. The next most influential were childhood experiences and parent role modeling; then, educational experiences and peer or media influences; and last, the psychosocial-emotional factors of anxiety, assertiveness, and personal confidence. These findings again remind us that vocational path motivation is a very complex and very individual source of influence.

Of Memory Role

The four preceding sections of this literature story have dealt with self-understanding, personality characteristics, personal experience, and vocational path motivation. Central to the process of understanding oneself and emancipating the psyche for higher development is the act of remembering and restorying our pasts. As Kerby (1991, p. 16) stated, our experience of personal identity and selfhood is wholly dependent upon consciousness and memory. For one to make sense of one's experiences with self and landscape, and to make the choices that life requires, it is essential to reconstruct the past--an act of remembrance.

Dewey (1887; as cited in Boydston & Bowers, pp. 154-167) described memory as a complex cognitive activity taking place in a realm of the "psychical" (p. 161) and defined it as "knowledge of particular things or events once present, but no longer so" (p. 154). He stated that memory is an outgrowth of our perception and that whereas the characteristic of perception is that of "space relations," the characteristic of memory is "time relations" (p. 154). In illustrating the labyrinthine circuitousness of the relationship between memory and perception, he noted that perception is not possible without memory, for memory provides the basis upon which meanings are constructed for current sensations, events, or interactions. Rubin (1986, p. 10) depicted the general organization of autobiographical memory as being "nested" (p. 10), whereby the events that make up our lives are nested like grains of sand in "sand castles, . . . in dunes, . . . in a beach" (p. 10), respectively, like actions, events, or whole periods of our lives.

Respecting the process involved, Dewey (1887; as cited in Boydston & Bowers) emphasized that the "objects of memory are wholly ideal" (p. 155), existing solely as a

mental images, with both perception and memory being constructions of the mind. The actual object or situation of previous perception, existing in its own right outside of the person, is obviously not present in a memory. Rather, the mind actively takes hold of the *idea* and projects it back into time, hence creating the "temporal world" (p. 158) of memory. As Zinsser (1987, pp. 19-21) concluded, the artifacts of the past survive only as acts of memory and writing, when thus recorded. He added that even when physical evidence is gone, he, as the rememberer, still "knew it in my bones" (p. 19). Kerby (1991, p.23) stated that these ideas must be interpreted to become meaningful. Consistent with constructivist ontology, we may correctly deduce from this discussion that the phenomena stimulating sensation do not possess meaning in their own right; instead, meaning is conferred upon them.

Consensus came from Crites (1971, pp. 297-301), who, in discussing the function of memory within the context of our consciousness, resolved that without memory our experience would have no coherence. He described a "dramatic tension" between our memory of past experience, attention to present experience, and anticipation of future experience, all coming to union in "every moment of experience" (p. 301). He explained that we recollect images stored in our memories, sometimes re-adjusting the understanding and meaning of past experiences. As Zinsser (1987, p.27) reminded us, when one writes about a memory, one is replacing it with a new memory.

Rubin (1986, pp. 3-23) took this "re-adjusting and replacing" theme further, contending that the reality of the memory to the rememberer is as important as the verifiability of the memory itself. He stated that memory reconstructions are driven by our self-images and that there are errors in them, compared to the actual event being

remembered. Importantly, he acknowledged that one can change one's memories and, conversely, that memories can change one's self-image and self. He concluded: "Autobiographical memory is not only a record, it is a resource" (p. 23).

Zinsser (1987, pp. 11-27) described the experiences he encountered in writing his own memoir and in reviewing those of other writers in the work he edited. He, like Rubin (1986), was struck by the unreliability of memory, even though it is one of the writer's most powerful tools. In reading the memoirs of other writers, he wondered at "how many passengers were along for the ride, subtly altering the past" (p. 17), as onlookers corrected with their versions of events. Of his own experience in one situation, he said, "The truth was somewhere between my mother's version and mine" (p. 17). But, also like Rubin, he qualified that his version had meaning and truth for him, and that was what counted most in doing a memoir: "I only know that it felt true" (p. 25). He noted that occasionally all principal players do agree to an objectively "right" version.

Zinsser (1987) also accepted that some writers have used fiction to help "conjure up what was real" (p. 26). As Kerby (1991, pp. 25-31) stated, imagination is difficult to separate from memory and is often used, usually unconsciously, to "fill in the gaps" of incomplete recollections. He concluded, stating that the past may be narrated in many ways and that our meanings for events change--the meaning for the past being unfinished until life is finished. And, one might contend, not even then.

Further to the issue of memory reliability, Coughlan (1995, pp. 1-3) presented some points in the debate raging over the validity of "recovered memory." On the question of whether or not it is "possible to forget a horrific experience and then remember it years later" (p. 2), she reviewed research which concluded that memories

can be recovered. On the second question, "Is that memory reliable?" (p. 2), she again concluded from research that memories can be notoriously unreliable. For example, Schacter (1996, pp. 276-279) described a therapeutic counselling situation in which a patient was led by her therapist to believe that the depression and disturbing intrusive thoughts she was experiencing were the result of unremembered sexual abuse. It was eventually determined, after much painful confrontation and estrangement in the woman's family, that in fact it was not unremembered sexual abuse causing her symptoms. Rather, it was an obsessive-compulsive disorder, which was remediated with appropriate medication.

Schacter (1996) continued, stating the need to acknowledge that the "recovered memories debate" is characterized, not by "black and white," but by many "shades of grey" (p. 277). He stated that there is a complex set of relationships between memory and reality and that memories cannot be simply classified as true or false. They must be investigated to determine how and in what ways they correspond to reality. Hence, better techniques must be developed to help distinguish between accurate recovered memories and illusory ones. This will save patients the trauma of falsely believing they were abused and maximize the credibility of legitimate sexual abuse survivors.

Moving to the theme of healing, in a review of two works by Aharon Appelfeld, Hoffman (1994, pp. 1-4) portrayed that author's exhortations for Holocaust survivors not to repress their memories. Rather, Appelfeld urged "the kind of palpable, precise, personal memory in which the emotional meaning of events is recognized, for subjective thought, and for the probing of survivor's own internal journeys" (p. 1). His three main concerns were with the survivors' psyches and their pasts, with seeking the kind of

response that might be sufficient to deal with their terrible legacies, and with exploring how they have dealt with their memories of anguish. His contention was that the stifling of memories hasn't brought peace or relief, but instead has "led to a numbing of the spirit" (p. 3).

Hoffman (1994) stated that in order to understand a horrible event, like the Holocaust, it must be confronted openly, honestly, and painfully by revisiting the experiences through memory. In this manner the event will not become "mystified" (p. 3) through our humility, respect, awe, or aura of taboo felt for it. She said that mystification, along with the unpleasantness associated with contemplating such a horror, might lead to repression of thought and memory. She firmly acknowledged the cathartic value of remembering one's story, and even more so, of telling it. Hence, she stated, "Appelfeld compassionately points the way toward knowledge that is, if not reconciling, then at least self-accepting and perhaps to some extent healing as well" (p. 4).

In his poem *Hope and Memory*, Dewey (as cited in Boydston, 1977, p. 5), like Hoffman, sought solace from the plights, wounds, and unhappiness of the world by reflecting on and rejoicing in his pleasant memories. He told of the hope they brought to him. Gyivicsan (1996) sounded a similar lament, longing for "that beautiful place, that beautiful time" in the past, where we are "sometimes wanting to stay, or maybe have it all back again" (p. 1). Capturing the temporality of our existence by acceding that the only way to return to those times is through our memories, she then warmly extolled the wonderful, comforting, and healing power of memories, adding, "We will forever turn to touch our precious memories" (p. 1). Conle's (1996, p. 301) findings concurred, demonstrating that her research participants found the process of remembering their

experiential stories very satisfying. Gyiviscan concluded that through sharing our memories with others, telling and listening to those stories, we heal not only ourselves, but each other as well.

Memory is central to the conduct of this research project. I, along with the participants, must revisit the past, searching out the meaning of bygone experiences. As we ferret out the stories of our becomings, Schacter (1996, pp. 279-308) advised us that "the beginnings of life stories are written in our families, and when we try to make sense of these stories . . . it is often to the family we return" (p. 279). In this quest, he said the fragile sense of memory provides us with only a general sense of who we are and where we have been. In fact, we may be profoundly moved by experiences that we do not accurately remember; and conversely, our thoughts and actions may be influenced implicitly by events which actually occurred but which we do not remember.

In conclusion, Schacter (1996) advocated trusting our memories as the "brain's attempt to make sense of our experience, and to tell coherent stories about it. . . . Our memories are the fragile but powerful products of what we recall from the past, believe about the present, and imagine about the future" (p. 308). His advice was faithfully adhered to in the conduct of this research project.

Literature Restoried

Much as my grandfather would tell a story, so the writings on self-understanding, personality characteristics, personal experience, vocational path motivation, and memory role are also telling us a story. They tell us that it is, indeed, a worthy and fruitful pursuit to seek a deeper understanding of ourselves. To help us gain that understanding, they tell us that, over time, we humans have been indelibly shaped by, and, in turn, shape the

forces of personality and experience as we journey along life's path. They tell us that these shapings and countershapings have been caused by an enigmatic complexity and ever-dynamic confluence of biological, social, and environmental factors. They tell us that each personal story of becoming has its own unique process and combination of causal factors. They tell us that the vocations and life pursuits we choose are the result of this ceaseless molding and sculpting. They tell us that it is through our ability to remember that we are able to construct meaning, making sense of our experiences with self and the environment, hence leading us to the deeper self-understanding sought and to fitting life choices--such as vocation. They tell us that our memories, like all human capacities, are fallible, but that the meaning and truth they generate is more important than their historical verity. And, compassionately, they tell us that it is catharsis--a healing and therapeutic act--to seek out deeper understanding of ourselves by recalling and reconstructing the stories of our pasts. The literature tells a good story, one that speaks to the truth of our abstrusely holistic human relationship with the universe.

The insights gained from this story provided a basis for the participants and me to enhance our appreciation of how we came to be educators. The acquisition of this deeper personal understanding, for the good of the individual and society, is supported in the discourse. Also, it is clear from the theory and research that personality attributes and life experiences are the primal factors in determining vocational choice. Now the question was to determine, through the use of our memories, what aspects of personality and experience are salient for the participants and me in this research. I knew this undertaking would be a journey of great magnitude, a journey of adventure, a journey of discovery.

CHAPTER III

The Method Tells a Story

Qualitative inquiry is an odyssey into our discipline,
our practice, and perhaps our souls.
--Glesne and Peshkin, *Becoming Qualitative Researchers*

Of Servant Leadership

As Glesne and Peshkin (1992) suggested, I think one might view this research journey as "an odyssey into our discipline, our practice, and perhaps our souls" (p. 179). To complete such an odyssean journey, one would need sustaining support and guidance. Greenleaf (1977, p. 7) spoke of this sustenance in describing how his concept of "servant leadership" grew out of Herman Hesse's novel, *Journey to the East*:

> In this story we see a band of men on a mythical journey. . . . The central figure of the story is Leo who accompanies the party as the *servant* who does their menial chores, but who also sustains them with his spirit and his song. He is a person of extraordinary presence. All goes well until Leo disappears. Then the group falls into disarray and the journey is abandoned. They cannot make it without the servant Leo. The narrator, one of the party, after some years of wandering finds Leo and is taken into the Order that had sponsored the journey. There he discovers that Leo, whom he had known first as *servant*, was in fact the titular head of the Order, its guiding spirit, a great and noble *leader*. (p. 7)

As Leo was the "servant leader" in Hesse's "journey to the east," so the research method was the "servant leader" that supported and sustained me on my odyssey of inquiry. Like Hesse's party, my research would also have fallen into disarray and have had to be abandoned without the vital guidance of this methodological mentor. Using my voice, this mentor tells the story of how this research journey unfolded.

Of Method Choice

In choosing the method for my research, I contemplated a number of perspectives. Rudestam and Newton (1992, p. 23) stated the traditional position, that an inquiry method should be predicated upon the nature of the research question and the concomitant types of data required. Although I considered this is a logical and defensible postulation, I was more captivated by Glesne and Peshkin (1992, p. 9) and Usher (1996, p. 13), who viewed the issue from a slightly different perspective. As Glesne and Peshkin stated,

> People tend to adhere to the methodology that is most consonant with their socialized worldview. We are told that the research problem should define whether one chooses a qualitative approach or a quantitative one. This, however, is not how we believe research necessarily is done or even *how it should be done* [emphasis added]. To the contrary, we are attracted to and shape research problems that match our personal view of seeing and understanding the world. (p. 9)

Usher (1996) concluded that choices of research method "are embedded in commitments to particular versions of the world (an ontology) and ways of knowing that world (an epistemology) . . . always held by the researcher, mostly tacitly" (p. 13). From these views I understood that one tends to approach problems and puzzles for research based on the mode of inquiry that best suits one's personal ontology and epistemology. Hence, I recognized that one's beliefs, values, personality orientation, socialization experiences, and attendant world view all influence the kinds of questions one sees and the way one chooses to go about answering them.

Of Being and Knowing: Ontology and Epistemology

Further, I realized that one's assumptions about the world and ways of knowing that world are entwined within one's personal ontology and epistemology. I found *ontology* defined as the branch of science investigating the nature and essential properties of "being" or reality. For an individual person, its twofold object is to determine what constitutes "reality," and what it means to "be." Flowing naturally from one's ontology, I found the notion of epistemology, or one's theory of what qualifies as knowledge. It became clear to me that one must know oneself well, self-reflexively, to be efficacious in the quest for knowledge or the conduct of research. I resonated with the conclusion of Van Manen (1984) that, to achieve this personally reflexive "self-knowing," we must first "discover what lies at the ontological core of our being" (p. 39). But, through these contemplations, I learned that one's personal ontology and epistemology are inextricably intertwined within one's world view, something that I would have to articulate for myself and my audience. Hence, the four stories that follow.

My world view. I envision the universe as a holistic entity, with all creation filled, permeated, and driven by the same spiritual energy. I see the transcendent being, God, as the center and source of this energy. With unknowable intricacies the energy ebbs, flows, and emanates dynamically among us and gives us life--you, me, the soil, rocks, flowers, trees, stars, dolphins, polar bears, Canada geese, and the earth herself--forming a complex web of interrelationships through all creation. It is as Morgan (1997) referred to the late David Bohm, a theoretical physicist, whose theory "invites us to understand the universe as a flowing and unbroken wholeness" (p. 251).

Further to the notions of dynamic, flowing activity, I concur with Strauss and Corbin (1994), who described the universe as being unable to stand still, "marked by tremendous fluidity, . . . where fragmentation, splintering and disappearance are the mirror images of, emergence, and coalescence, . . . where nothing is strictly determined" (p. 280). We often perceive these manifestations within the unbroken whole as being chaotic. However, aside from the fact that our perceptions of "chaos and order" are based on incomplete understandings, we do occasionally glimpse, through the "fog of incomprehension," an essence of the overall order.

Morgan (1997) described this complexity and expressed the amazement I feel when I perceive order emerging from what appeared to be chaos.

> Complex nonlinear systems like ecologies or organizations are characterized by multiple systems of interaction that are both ordered and chaotic. Because of this internal complexity, random disturbances can produce unpredictable events and relationships that reverberate throughout a system, creating novel patterns of change. The amazing thing, however, is that despite all the unpredictability, coherent order *always* emerges out of the randomness and surface chaos. (p. 262)

It is through an abstruse and esoteric web of interrelationship that all is brought together in a coherence that no human being is capable of fully understanding, even though we as humans have a privileged role in the order of things. Like Morgan, I truly marvel at the wonders of this universe and regularly feel awe and marvel in experiencing its unfoldings and revelations.

Primary in my world view is the Jungian perspective, contending that the "wisdom of the ages" lies at our disposal through this web of interrelationship in the unbroken wholeness of the universe. Much as the information of the modern technological world is available through the "world wide web" of Internet, so a sense of

the cosmos is available through the web of interrelationship. To experience the universe, we must learn to "tune in" in a special way through our five common sensory modalities, our human compatriots, our instincts, and our intuitions.

My socialization, growing up in a closely knit rural community, placed me in close communion with the "unbroken wholeness" of the natural and human landscape. This bucolic nurturing, and my "oneness" with that environment, formed and shaped the "story" that I am in the present. Like Marmon-Silko (1997), my "human consciousness remains within the hills, canyons, . . . plants, clouds, . . . sky" (p. 27), forests, fields, creatures, and people of that world. This happens through spirit, that essence of connectedness and communion that we as humans experience with our world, manifesting itself in a caring appreciation, understanding, valuing, and love of other things. It is a sense of oneness that makes me an indivisible part of my landscape, past and present.

My ontological being. Through the capacity of "autopoiesis," as described by Morgan (1997, pp. 253-254), I am inseparably unified into the universe--me a part of it and it a part of me. I have no being apart from the unbroken wholeness of that universe, and my interactions with it give meaning to my existence. As I navigate this manifold world, I connect with it by using my five sensory modalities, my instincts, and my intuitions. During these interactions I interpret the objects, events, and situations encountered, constructing meaning and attaching it to them. They are without meaning apart from that which I bestow on them. When I recognize a constructed meaning as my personal reality, it then becomes an experience. Accordingly, I experience my reality constructions and then incorporate them into my bank of personal knowledge.

However, my personal reality constructions are based on interpretations derived from the learnings of my socialization. Hence, my realities are socially constructed, forged over time in the crucible of loquacious exchange with human compatriots, both directly and vicariously through text. Therefore, the derived meanings and understandings which produce recognized realities, experienced by individual people, are really a cultural phenomena. Yet, paradoxically they are highly individual and personal at the same time, as each of us puts a personal "slant" on our reality constructions. Thus, I recognize the existence of multiple realities, as my understandings and those of other people ebb and flow through various cultural contexts, experiences, and personal interpretations of interactions with the universe.

Morgan (1997) described the social construction of meaning, understanding, and reality, linking this process to the notion of culture, as follows:

> Shared values, . . . beliefs, . . . meaning, . . . understanding, and . . . sense making are all different ways of describing culture. In talking about culture we are really talking about a process of reality construction that allows people to see and understand particular events, actions, objects, utterances, or situations in distinctive ways. These patterns of understanding help us to cope with the situations being encountered and also provide a basis for making our own behavior sensible and meaningful. (p. 138)

Our cultures and subcultures, with their various socialization processes and power structures, are the filters through which our reality constructions are strained. Through our cultures we are influenced to "more or less" common understandings.

My epistemological knowing. The socially constructed realities discussed in the last section are the basis of knowledge. To know is to perceive these realities with certainty, understanding them clearly as truth, fact, or existing phenomenon. In short, the

way I view the world, construct meaning, and establish reality determines what I consider knowledge. Given that there are multiple realities, it follows that there are therefore multiple truths, facts, and perceptions of existence. Thus, I recognize that there are multiple "knowings" and multiple ways of knowing.

Because of the personal "slant" we put on our constructions, the reality of our meaning, understanding, and knowledge is not automatically generalizable to other situations. The knowledge that becomes applicable to other settings must be shared and agreed upon, the result of jointly constructed meaning and mutual understanding among the people involved in that context. Although I perceive meaningful realities and accept them as truths or facts of existence, I acknowledge that other people may not perceive or "know" in the same way.

Because any behaviours motivated by our perceptions essentially have moral and ethical ramifications, Campbell (1994) advocated a code to guide our actions:

> Such a code should embody at least some element of universality. An individual's perception of right and wrong may be a personal matter; nevertheless, morality and ethics themselves must transcend mere preference driven by opinion, righteousness, prejudice, or self-interest, and moral persons would not justify their own behavior in ways that they would find unacceptable in others. (p. 3)

Therefore, before acting upon my perceptions, I bear the responsibility of comparing my knowledge with that of others, arriving at a socially constructed mutual understanding.

This act of seeking out "common" knowledge has multiple ways or paths to fulfillment, research being one of them. As Glesne and Peshkin (1992) concluded, "We have all been engaged in a variety of careful and diligent searches without necessarily labeling the process research, let alone a particular type of research" (p. 4). However, as

Merriam (1988, p. 6) suggested, when we are required to undertake "systematic inquiry" (p. 6), it is necessary to engage in a formal research process. The object of my "systematic inquiry" grew out of my personal ontological and epistemological assumptions.

My personal reflexivity. In keeping with the fact that no one comes to a question or inquiry with a "blank page" with respect to the solution, so I come with a sense of my motivating attributes. Like the elemental forces of nature that forged the geology and geography of our physical world, so the biosocial forces of personality and experience sculpted me, the human individual into an educator. The personality traits I believe to have channeled me towards education were a deep sensitivity and caring for people; an inclination to bring about peace, harmony, and goodwill among people; a capacity to forgive; a desire to serve people for the greater good and to be viewed affectionately for my efforts; a striving for justice and egalitarianism; and a zeal to succeed and excel in these and all other endeavours.

Entwined within and throughout the aforementioned characteristics is a "playfulness" or desire to have fun and enjoy humour as I interact with my world. Lugones (1987, pp. 3-17) advocated "playfulness, 'world'-traveling and loving perception" (p. 3) as one moves about among contexts, cultures, and situations. She described the playfulness as "an openness to being a fool, which is a combination of not worrying about competence, not being self-important, not taking norms as sacred and finding ambiguity and double edges a source of wisdom and delight"(p. 17). I add to her description a thorough permeation of humour.

Of Constructivist Paradigm

In order to place this research metonomically in its proper place on the methodological landscape, I began searching under the paradigmatic rubric. I found Guba (1981) stating that "the choice between paradigms in any inquiry ought to be made on the basis of the best fit between the assumptions and postures of a paradigm and the phenomenon being studied" (p. 56). I agreed with Merriam (1988), concluding that the appropriate inquiry method for a research project is "determined by how the problem is shaped, by the questions it raises, and the type of end product desired" (p. 6).

In this study the research problem and its contributing questions were shaped by my ontological and epistemological assumptions. The nature of the required data warranted an intensive exploration of the interpretations that we, as participants, place on the subjective meaning of the realities we experience. I determined, as Greenfield and Ribbins (1993) said, that I must discover how the participants "interpret the world in which they live" (p. 7). My conclusion was that the process would have to be interpretive, inductive, and theory generating in nature. As Rudestam and Newton (1992, p.34) stated, understanding would be a fusion of my perspective and that of the participants.

Accordingly, I resolved that my research project would be best addressed through the "constructivist paradigm." Schwandt (1994, p. 128) explained that it was originally called the "naturalistic paradigm" by Guba (1981, p. 76); however, in writings since 1985, Guba and Lincoln have renamed it the "constructivist paradigm." This paradigm was called "naturalistic" because it sought "to understand phenomena in their naturally occurring states" (Rudestam & Newton, 1992, p. 32). Within the constructivist

paradigm, I established that the study must be conducted in the "hermeneutic-interpretive" (Usher, 1996, p. 18) mode of the qualitative methodology, using the narrative inquiry method.

The term *qualitative* refers to my use of words, text, and language to portray the research, as opposed to the use of numbers in *quantitative* methods. The study is hermeneutic because the texts of interview transcripts and participant stories were interpreted, employing frequent dialogue to integrate participant meaning with mine (Rudestam & Newton, 1992, pp. 33-35). It is narrative because I believe that many people, including me, are "storytelling organisms" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2), with our lives taking the form of stories. And it is through stories told and heard that we can best understand human experience. Also, relating to the above-cited quotation from Merriam (1988), I wanted the "end product" (p. 6) to be a research text of narrative form and rhetoric.

As Glesne and Peshkin (1992) concluded that "qualitative inquiry is an odyssey into our discipline, our practice, and perhaps our souls" (p. 179), so it was that this research required my entering into the "souls" and subjective realities of the participants and myself in our naturally occurring states. In recounting the experience of my master's thesis, I noted that the constructivist paradigm and qualitative methodology rest on the philosophical foundations of phenomenology and the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism (Kluczny 1984, pp. 30-32). To bring a full understanding to my audience in this research text, I decided that these notions must be further elucidated. Hence the two stories that follow.

The phenomenological perspective. I understand the phenomenological philosophy as Bogdan and Biklen (1992, p.34) summarized it, stating that there are multiple ways in which humans interpret their encounters with the world, all depending upon their social interactions. Further, I recognize that it is the meanings attached to these encounters that constitute our experiences of reality. Consequently, I see reality as socially constructed. Broadly speaking, all social sciences rest on this philosophical base; however, as Rudestam and Newton (1992) stated, "More than other forms of inquiry, phenomenology attempts to get beneath how people describe their experience to the structures that underlie consciousness" (p. 33). My study was not meant to seek out the primordial essence and deeply obscured meaning of the phenomenon that Van Manen (1984, pp. 37-49) prescribed for phenomenological research.

On the contrary, in keeping with Rudestam and Newton's (1992, pp. 33-34) description, it was a hermeneutic/interpretive study concerned with deriving a rich understanding of the phenomenon, from the data, context, and participants, all of which give it meaning. I agree, as Glesne and Peshkin (1992) stated, that "interpretive approaches perceive reality as socially constructed and the researcher interacts with participants in order to understand their social constructions" (pp. 109-110). To derive this understanding and meaning, the participants and I had to "take an active role in bringing our realities into being through various interpretive schemes" (Morgan, 1997, p. 141). It was an openly dialogic process involving the participants and the field texts in a hermeneutic operation. As the researcher responsible for a successful outcome, I had to "think critically and . . . engage in the required reality testing" (p. 219).

The symbolic interactionist perspective. The above-mentioned dialogic process relates to the theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism, which is entwined within the phenomenological philosophy and qualitative, interpretive research. I drew on the consensus of Berg (1995, p. 8), Bogdan and Biklen (1992, pp. 35-37), and Schwandt (1994, p. 124) that symbolic interactionism involves the following set of related propositions:

1. Reality, as it is experienced and known by people, is constructed through social interactions in which individuals create their own meanings for situations and phenomena.

2. These meanings are established and modified through an interpretive process in which individuals engage in deliberate, thoughtful, self-reflexive action based on socialized learnings, their original constructed meanings, and new situational contingencies.

3. Individual behaviour toward situations and phenomena is shaped and guided by these meanings, which are constantly revised based on further social interactions.

4. These *interactions* are emergent, negotiated, often unpredictable, and *symbolic*, involving communication through the use of language and other symbols.

Bogdan and Biklen summarized: "Human experience is mediated by interpretation. . . . Objects, people, situations, and events do not possess their own meaning; rather, meaning is conferred on them" (pp. 35-36). Symbolic interaction generates meaning.

Berg (1995, p. 8) said that my core task as a symbolic interactionist researcher was to capture the essence of this process for interpreting or attaching meaning to various symbols. The implication for this research was that I had to enter into the defining

process in order to understand reality from the participants' perspectives. This was done through social interaction and the analysis of language forms, resulting from stories told in conversational interviews and narratives written by the participants and me. Together, in social interactions, we interpreted the meanings attached to our recollected experiences and personality characteristics. We did this by analyzing our symbolic expressions; that is, our spoken and written stories. Clearly, language was the key element in this process.

The language perspective. Because language theory is fundamental to symbolic interationism and hence constructivism, I found it essential to review this domain as a part of my research process. Being the reseacher, I needed to understand that language is all pervasive and embedded in our being, so much that it is easily taken for granted, with its impact often not considered. As Morgan (1997, p. 217) cited Marshall McLuhan, our wondering about or questioning the role of language is similar to a fish wondering about or questioning the role of water. Among ordinary people, I think it is likely one of the last things that would be noticed for questioning. Lysaught (1984, pp. 110-111) revealed this truth in Korzybski's graphic portrayal of why language is so important: "Every language system . . . contains a broad set of silent assumptions and premises which are so fundamental and pervasive that they represent a foundational orientation to life itself" (p. 110). He added that "without language there is no culture; moreover, language is fundamental to human nature as we know it" (p. 107).

I found Eisner (1988) supporting this case when he stated that "knowledge is rooted in experience and requires a form for its representation. Since all forms of representation constrain what can be represented, they can only partially represent what

we know. Forms of representation not only constrain representation, they limit what we seek" (p. 15). Kerby (1991, pp. 1-14) concurred, saying that one's entire ontological sense of self is provided solely by language. More specifically, he stated that it is through the narrative constructions of language, namely stories, that the self is given content, delineated, embodied, and hence bestowed with meaning. He said, "Such a self arises out of signifying practices rather than existing prior to them as an autonomous or Cartesian agent" (p. 1). As one small example of the complexity in these signifying practices, Neuman (1994, p.227) alluded to the confusion that can arise over implicit connotative and explicit denotative meanings of words, something I had to consider in my conversational interviews. Most important, I recognized that metaphor is absolutely foundational to the notion of signifying practices in language.

In sonorous resonance with my ontological being, Oswick and Grant (1996) quoting Burke, suggested that "metaphors are windows into the soul, if not collective unconscious, of the social system" (p. 220). Lakoff and Johnson (as cited in Conle, 1996) helped me understand metaphor, asserting that its primary function "is to provide a partial understanding of one kind of experience in terms of another kind of experience" (p. 312). Morgan (1996, pp. 227-229) expanded, describing metaphor as "a primal, generative process that is fundamental to the creation of human understanding and meaning in all aspects of life, . . . [allowing us] to understand one phenomenon through another" (p. 228). Gadamer (as cited in Conle, 1996, pp. 310-311) echoed, suggesting that in this sense, metaphor is less a rhetorical device and more a basic process of thought--the essential function of metaphor in language.

Oswick and Grant (1996, p. 216) spoke to the versatility of metaphor, its capability of serving different purposes at different times and more than one purpose at the same time. For example, reflecting back on the literature, I recalled how the metaphorical process of resonance helps bring deeper meaning to our life narratives. As Conle (1996) concluded "Metaphor is not something we consciously use and manipulate. . . . It is a process we are involved in and which makes us" (p. 311), providing a depth of insight into our own lives. Oswick and Grant also noted that the other tropes, "synecdoche, metonymy, and irony" (p. 222), although perhaps not as fundamental as metaphor, also contribute importantly to language. Most of all, I came to see metaphor, and trope generally, as inherently and essentially natural in the symbolic interactionist process of creating meaning, hence bringing reality to our ontlogical and epistemological beings.

Through all of this I learned that language, metaphor, and narration play *the* primary role in the life of the mind. As Kerby (1991) concluded, language is not simply "a tool for communicating or mirroring back what we otherwise discover in our reality but is itself an important formative part of that reality, part of its very texture" (p. 2). It became clear to me that language is embedded and cannot be separated from the world as we know it, and accordingly, people cannot extricate themselves from language. LeGuin (1989, p. 44) concurred when she wrote that the very foundations of our human freedom with the moral choices involved are made possible through language. Thus, I concluded, the self is not a prelinguistic given that merely employs language, but is, instead, a product of language. It is as Gadamer (as cited in Kerby, 1991) said: "being that can be understood is language" (p. 2).

I believed that LeGuin (1989, p. 39) was in agreement with Kerby (1991, pp. 3-8) when she said that narrative is a central function of language, where learning to speak is learning to tell stories. Kerby's position was that language, by its very nature, leads to narratives which "are a primary embodiment of our understanding of the world, of experience, and ultimately of ourselves" (p. 3). As Greenleaf (1977) said, "Nothing is meaningful until it is related to the hearer's own experience" (p. 18). Thus, I came to see that through the unifying action of narration, the experiences in our lives are given meaning and joined together. I determined that one's self-understanding is mediated primarily through language, especially significant being the narrative nature of one's self knowledge. Self-understanding and self-identity therefore depend upon one's personal narrative.

Kerby (1991, pp. 6-7) added that the self is "inseparable from the narrative or life story it constructs for itself or otherwise inherits" (p. 6). He thus concluded that story telling is the fundamental way in which human events are understood. Given that human existence is temporal, with our histories being dramas in which each individual is a leading character, he said narration fills in the temporal expanses, providing us a unified, holistic sense of person and self-identity. In light of this evidence, I determined that narrative expression, that central function of language, is best suited to portray human experience--the heart of my research project.

The narrative form perspective. Based on my studies, I saw a narrative as a collection of described events assembled together, spawning a story that is meaningful to people. Carter (1993, pp. 6-10) validated my view, defining *story* as a construction "telling or recounting of a string of events" (p. 6); involving a situation with a

predicament, conflict, or struggle; having an animate protagonist who purposefully engages in the situation; and having a plot or sequence with implied causality during which the predicament is resolved. She added that, to be a story, it must also have a temporal relationship between a continuity of events, a witness to tell, and a projection of human values on the content.

Hence, with Carter's (1993) summary and her quotation of Scholes (p. 6), I was able to deduce that narrative is formed of the following elements: *meaning, sequence, plot, temporality, causality, continuity of subject matter, and scene.* As McKiel (1995) stated, "A narrative is a story consisting of a series of events connected by temporality, continuity of subject matter, causality, sequence, place, and plot" (p. 59). However, I must make it clear that these elements are not discrete and independent; rather, they come together in a holistic complication of esoteric, symbiotic, and indivisible narrative unity.

In describing these elements, I drew on the following. Polkinghorne (1988, p. 6) said that narrative ***meaning*** is created by the perception that one thing causes another, and the meaning of each human experience "is produced by the part it plays in the whole episode" (p. 6). ***Temporality*** relates to the unfolding of these episodic events over time, an essence that Kerby (1991, pp. 15-16) captured when he said; "Time is a primary modality in this life that we are" (p. 16). He emphasized the temporality of human existence "both by the beginning and the end that our physical being exhibits and by the history that threads between, and even beyond these two poles" (p. 15). As Crites (1971, p. 301) suggested, there is a dramatic tension in the present among a past remembered, a present attended to, and a future anticipated, "all coming to union in every moment of

experience" (p. 301). Thus, I recognized how the temporal connectedness between past, present, and future gives us our sense of identity, with past and future converging to create the present. "Without temporal relation we have only a list" (Carter, 1993, p. 7).

Also, there is a certain rhythmic quality to the temporality of narrative; as King Solomon so aptly penned,

> To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the heavens; . . . a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted; . . . a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance" (Ecc. 3:1-4, King James Version).

We humans, when in tune with the pulsing regularity of the universe, conduct the affairs of our being according to these rhythms. Crites (1971) suggested that the temporality of narrative is like "the rhythms and melodic lines of music. . . . We do not hear them all at once . . . yet we experience them as a unity, a unity through time" (p. 293). Being a musician, albeit of extremely modest proportions, I was moved to a deeper understanding of narrative unity by this metaphor.

This temporal connectedness naturally contributes to the narrative element, ***continuity of subject matter***. As Dewey (1938; as cited in Boydston & Levine, 1988) stated the principle of continuity of experience, "Every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after" (p. 19), so there is the same principle of continuity affecting subject matter of our life narratives. As an example, I have often found new meaning or understanding relating to the subject of a past event, influenced by the subject of a present or anticipated one.

As I considered the temporal connectedness and continuity of subject matter, ***causality*** came to mind. However, in narrative, cause relates to the influence or implication one event has for a future one. As Chatman (1990, p. 9) said, it is more like "contingency," where direct causes cannot be assumed; rather, events or situations "all work together to evoke a certain situation or state of affairs" (p. 9). I trust that this is why Crites (1986) referred to an "illusion of causality" (p. 168), in which appearances can beguile one "into thinking that the later episodes are causally related to the earlier rather than continuing to spin out of pure possibility" (p. 168). In my research I realized how the dynamic and intricately complicated interconnectedness within our holistic life narratives precluded the attribution of exact causes. Given a probable multiplicity of causes, I could at best approximate those which influenced me. Of course, this is not to suggest that one should avoid speculating about and identifying those factors perceived to be influencers. That is an honorable quest, one at the very heart of all inquiry.

Sequence simply refers to an occurrence of events, experiences, or situations ordered one after the other. This sequence is often observed as a beginning, middle, and end. Carter (1993) quoted Scholes, who said that this sequence of occurrences gives narrative its "very special syntactic shape" (p. 6). Connelly and Clandinin (1990, p. 8) described ***scene*** as the place where a narrative's action occurs. It is the setting within the landscape, or the stage on which the drama is played out. Lastly, ***plot*** is the element of narrative form "which configures the events into a meaningful whole by connecting them thematically" (McKiel, 1995, p. 62). Whereas the other elements listed above are the organizing functions which arrange occurrences within a narrative, plot is a thematic glue that holds the story together. As Connelly and Clandinin (1990, p. 9) concluded, plot

meaningfully links our feelings of significance for the past, value of the present, and intention toward the future. This reflection on narrative form allowed me to see how meaning is constructed within the whole of narrative unity. It led me to an explicit description of narrative as an inquiry method.

The narrative inquiry perspective. My heart soars with Greene (1991) as she revelled, "The sounds of story telling are everywhere today. Narratives of many kinds are being opened and explored. Journal keeping goes on apace on all levels of learning, people write autobiographies, shape family histories, and become authors of their own lives" (p. ix). Heilbrun (1988) added an important clarification: "What matters is that lives do not serve as models, only stories do that" (p. 37). Deal (1995, p. 124) captured my fancy in relating the importance of story among people as a bonding force, a transmitter of knowledge and wisdom, and a powerful method of orienting newcomers to the social group. From the aforementioned discourse on language, I know the modality of story has an important place in socially constructing meanings and elucidating the shared understandings of the resulting realities experienced. Based on the foregoing arguments, I determined that story was an appropriate vehicle for this research project and my style as a researcher.

My psyche resonates with Coles (1989), who asked, "How shall I comprehend the life that is in me and around me?" and concluded that "to do so stories are constructed and told and remembered" (p. 189). His contention was that we never stop learning about ourselves and our landscapes, and that we learn by telling and hearing stories of ourselves and others. Trinh (1989) agreed, likening personal writing to a mirror, "an instrument of self-knowledge, . . . this encounter of I with I, the power of identification"

(p. 22) to help one know oneself more completely. Van Manen (1984) added, "To write means to write myself, not in a narcissistic but in a deep, collective sense" (p. 68). Or as Sewall (1994), in researching the "folkloric voice" (p. 5), identified his purpose as one of understanding teaching, himself, and the relationship between the two. In like manner I sought to know myself and the participants more deeply through narrative inquiry.

Schnyder (1997) captured the essence of narrative inquiry in her poem "A Fine Brush" as she spoke of thoughts, dreams, emotions, memories, reality, stories, conversation, understanding, and spiritual wellness:

Tendrils of thought float aimlessly,
Wisps of dreams intertwine.
Sorrow, joy, success, and failure,
Combine together in the braiding of the reality
that memories evoke.
The taming of stories,
Brushed with the gentle art of conversation.
Tied up with the ribbons of understanding,
Allows for the confidence that the spirit is well
groomed and prepared for the journeys to come.

I chose the medium of story, or narrative, to document this inquiry into our storied lives because it is through narrative that I could best describe the experience. As Connelly and Clandinin (1990, p. 2) declared, "The main claim for the use of narrative in educational research is that humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives. The study of narrative, therefore, is the study of the ways humans experience the world" (p. 2). As a narrative researcher, in turn, I described these lives, collecting and telling stories of them and writing a narrative research text of the experience (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 2). Although there may be some people who are not "storytelling organisms," I chose participants who, like me, are storied beings.

Within the realm of narrative inquiry, the method employed for this research was that of memoir writing. Memoir is a modified form of "autobiographical writing." Clandinin and Connelly (1994, p. 22) explained autobiographical writing as having its focus on writing "the whole context of a life" (p. 22). However, Zinsser (1987, pp. 21-24) described a memoir as reflecting some portion of a life, as opposed to an autobiography, which records a whole life. The memoir is a "window into a life" (p. 21), a work of history, catching a moment in the life of a person and a society. It is a means to validate one's life. Hence, the writer must be "an editor of his own life" (p. 24), cutting and pruning an unwieldy story to give it narrative shape.

Because my intention in this work was not to explore the whole context of my life, but rather, only those portions which related to my becoming an educator, it became a memoir rather than an autobiographical account. My memoir turned out to be a "mosaic, . . . an accumulation of little pieces of reality, shaped into an image" (Edel, 1989, p. 6). In essence, this work was a "conversation" like that described by Godard, Knutson, Marlatt, Mezei, and Scott (1994, p. 20); only, it was one with myself, assisted by the participants, and with the literature pertaining to the study. As Heilbrun (1988) asserted, one can "write one's life" (p. 11), thus capturing the essence of who one is and even influencing who one may become. This is exactly what I did.

Of Data Collection, Analysis, and Presentation

I identify with Van Manen's (1984) expression that "the experience of recalling has been described as a form of re-collecting, a gathering of the kinds of understandings that belong to being" (p. 68). Based on memories and recollections, I related stories

describing the personality attributes and poignant experiences I perceived as having been instrumental in shaping my becoming an educator.

As a complement and resonance to my stories, I also collected the recalled stories of the participants, a purposefully selected group of five other educators, a mix of females and males, chosen for their vocation, interest in narrative, varied backgrounds, and varied life and career stages. This array provided a "broadest scope of information" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 178). As Conle (1996, p. 319) said, the heterogeneity of participant groups is an asset because it facilitates resonance without depending on sameness, also prompting us to seek dissonance, thus investigating how we are different.

The interview as conversation. The interview process is a complex and dynamic enterprise. As Glesne and Peshkin (1992) alluded, interviewing is "the process of getting words to fly" (p. 63). Their description is apt because in the loquacious, free flowing conversation of my interview, words did indeed "fly," but not with any "regularity and predictability" (p. 63). Consistent with the spirit in which this research was conducted, I had developed a warm rapport and trusting relationship with the participants prior to the interviews. This was crucial in helping to engender the climate that "needs to be developed before people can be willing to release certain kinds of information" (p. 35). Throughout the entire process, including pre and post events, I followed my natural inclination to manifest a sincere warmth, acceptance, empathy, and friendliness toward each participant.

Employing the art and craft of good conversation, respectful, courteous, and meaningful, I interviewed each participant individually. As Weber (1985, p. 68) suggested, it was a two-way dialogue where I contributed substantively to the topic--my

stories often stimulating participant stories. From a more analytical perspective, this conversation can be described as Ryckman (1982, p. 398) illustrated: a conversational, in-depth, and open-ended technique, applied in a Rogerian "facilitative therapist" counseling mode. My conversation was consistent with the criterion Bertaux and Kohli (as cited in Young & Tardiff, 1992) established for the "narrative interview: . . . a process characterized by the relatively uninterrupted relation of a life story, followed by questions that are worded to elicit more narrative detail" (p. 136).

Each interview was conducted and audio-taped in a natural and comfortable setting, free of potentially disruptive effects. In this way, I increased the potential of gaining a mutually meaningful understanding and arriving at a shared reality. Most important, significant measures were taken to ensure that the participants were at ease and comfortable in the conversational setting. The whole process was played out and experienced as an informal and pleasurable social event--a joy of life.

I found a complexity in the plenitude of simultaneously occurring events: listening, noting nonverbal cues, interpreting, processing, remembering, deciding when to probe or clarify, monitoring the recorder ,and all the while trying to understand. Listening in its own right was a monumental task that can be easily underestimated by people and hence poorly done. Peck (1978) told a story of the profound commitment required by authentic listening. In his effort to understand, he said

> I therefore listened to him with all the intentness of which I was capable. Throughout the hour and a half he talked sweat was literally dripping down my face in the air-conditioned auditorium. By the time he was finished I had a throbbing headache, the muscles in my neck were rigid from my effort at concentration and I felt completely drained and exhausted. (p. 122)

Although I did not experience the pronounced physical symptoms described by Peck, I did dedicate my exertion and concentration to effective listening. I also took notes during the interview, capturing key meanings and questions while they were "fresh." These notes became a complement to the audiotape transcriptions, adding another dimension to the assurance that I was gaining a clear understanding. In recognizing the complexity of the conversational interview, I put much serious planning, practise, and contemplation into the process.

The analyses of field texts. I found it useful to listen to the taped interviews from beginning to end a few times to get a comprehensive sense of their content and meaning, not to mention a valuable use of the two-hour drive to the university. One perhaps gets a better grasp of the participants' meaning by listening and remembering than by relying solely on transcription. As Weber (1985) stated, the verbatim writing down of

> someone's oral language transforms that language, robbing it at times of its power, clarity, and depth, even its meaning. . . . Verbatim transcription makes little accommodation for tone of voice and emphasis, and little accommodation for the differences in style, words, and form that exists between oral and written modes of communication. (p. 71)

After the initial listening, I analyzed the field-text transcriptions by reviewing them to identify emergent concepts and topics. The transcript review was conducted both line by line, seeking out specific concepts and topics, and then generally by grouping these into categories. I used my own self-created shorthand and coding system to carry out this task. The whole process was interspersed with timely re-listenings to the tapes, further clarifying my understandings. My detailed analyses contributed ideas and concepts that were then grouped into more general categories. These general categories

were then subsumed into major themes, a broader compilation yet. In addition to the transcripts, I gathered open-ended narrative writings from the participants, describing their journeys to becoming educators. These were requested after the interviews and analysed in the same manner as the transcripts.

These storied field texts, analysed, categorized, synthesized, and interpreted, were grouped according to major themes describing the aspects of personality and experience that influenced us to become educators. As Glesne and Peshkin (1992, p. 127) suggested, the texts were analysed as they were being collected, as well as after the fact. In a modified "hermeneutic dialectic circle" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 152), regular consultation occurred with the participants to ensure the verisimilitude of my interpretations and reconstructions. The analyses were culminated with the inductive generation of theory showing how the conceptualized themes fit together and related to one another, ultimately explaining those influences that led us to become educators. As Bernard (cited in Miles & Huberman, 1994) stated, this explanation is a means of "making complicated things understandable by showing how their component parts fit together according to some rules" (p. 90). Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 90) labelled this explanation as theory--a predominant feature of my field-text analysis.

The presentation. This research text is presented as a collection of coherently related stories providing background, describing experiences, presenting thematic outcomes, and explaining those influencers of our becoming. Overall, it is a memoir of our experience in becoming educators. In my own personal story, relating to each of the themes identified, I included narratives from my earliest recollections of that influence and those from manifestations of that influence as an adult educator. In this way the

internal condition of "temporality" described by Clandinin and Connelly (1994, p. 29) was ensured, by dealing with both past and present. Clandinin and Connelly (1994, pp. 28-30) described the other internal conditions of presentation in narrative inquiry as "voice" (p. 28) and "signature" (p. 30). Voice not only has to do with the fact that I was able to speak authoritatively, having "something to say" (p. 28), but it also means I spoke on behalf of the participants and stated my own views as opposed to recycling the thoughts of others. Signature relates to the manner and style in which I wrote this research text and is closely associated with voice. As Agger (1991) stated:

> No matter how seemingly insignificant, every rhetorical gesture of the text contributes to its overall meaning. How we arrange our footnotes, title our paper, describe our problem, establish the legitimacy of our topic through literature reviews, and use the gestures of . . . method in presenting our results--all contribute to the overall sense of the text. (p. 115)

Accordingly, in this narrative memoir I established a textual style that clearly and poignantly identified my voice and signature, portraying the shared meanings and understandings gained from the research.

Of Trustworthiness Quality

It was important to me that this research be a work of high merit and professional competence. Hence, I viewed its quality and worth as vitally important. In the concept of *trustworthiness* Guba and Lincoln (1989, p. 233) revealed the means to this end. They labeled trustworthiness as the constructivist analogue for the traditional positivist concept of "methodological rigor" (p. 233). As Glesne and Peshkin (1992, p. 146) indicated, I wanted my interpretations to be trustworthy, or affirmed as true by my participants and colleagues. Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 114) and Denzin and Lincoln (1994, pp. 13-14) listed the following criteria for judging the trustworthiness of constructivist methods:

credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The following describes the implementation of these measures.

The credibility. Guba (1981, p. 80) described the credibility criteria as establishing the truth value of an inquiry. This is achieved by ensuring genuine similarity in form, or "verisimilitude" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 7), between participant constructions and researcher conclusions. In concurrence with Owens (1982, p. 11), my research strategy provided a broad exploration at the outset, simultaneously accompanied by checking for accuracy, seeking verification and confirmation as the data collection proceeded. By conducting conversational interviews in a natural environment, I was able to minimize the ever-present diversions that interfere with the process of constructing valid, shared meanings and understandings. My participants validated the field texts and conclusions through "member checks" (Guba, 1981, p. 80), thus ensuring that I represented their views accurately.

Although, Berg (1995, pp. 4-5), Glesne and Peshkin (1992, p. 146), and Owens (1982, pp. 14-15) advocated the use of *triangulation*, I concurred with Guba and Lincoln (1989, pp. 240-241), who suggested that this concept implies the existence of unchanging phenomena that *can* be triangulated. As discussed earlier in the *limitations* section of this research text, our constructions are subject to fluidity and are not expected to be ultimately true or remain constant for long periods. Hence, it was not appropriate to attempt triangulating them. Instead, I employed another technique called *overlap methods* (Guba, 1981, p. 86), whereby more than one data-collection method was employed.

In my overlap method I collected participant constructions in the form of transcribed interviews and written narratives, thus enhancing the possibility of capturing the true essence of their storied experiences. My interpretations of both field-text types were also vigorously "member checked" with the participants around the "hermeneutic dialectic circle" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, pp. 149-155), consisting of my participants and me. In this way I was also able to expand the breadth of possible constructions, seeking out "negative cases" (pp. 237-238); that is, data that did not seem to fit the emerging patterns. However, I wish Guba and Lincoln would change the term, for I found them anything but "negative;" rather, they were a joyful celebration of our diversity.

Additionally, I sought "structural corroboration or coherence, . . . testing every datum and interpretation against all others to be certain that there are no [unexplainable] internal conflicts or contradictions" (Guba, 1981, p. 85). I used "prolonged engagement" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 237), whereby I spent quality time with my participants, getting to know them and developing trust and rapport. In this way I was assured of getting authentic stories, rather than something the participants might have thought I wanted to hear. I also practiced "progressive subjectivity" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 238), where I monitored my own developing interpretive construction, not overpowering the participants and making sure that the final construction is a joint one.

Owens (1982) recommended the collection of "referential adequacy materials" (p. 15) from which interpretations may be analysed and tested. In keeping with this advice, I maintained an "audit book" which included personal reflections, transcriptions, written stories, and audiotapes. Glesne and Peshkin (1992, p. 147) and Guba and Lincoln (1989, p. 243) suggested that this collection of material be made available as an "audit

trail" for an outsider to review An external audit by a qualified colleague was provided as part of the research process.

Owens (1982) also suggested the use of "peer debriefing or consultation, . . . [allowing the researcher to] disengage from the setting and discuss the progress of the work and the nature of the experience with qualified peers who are interested" (p. 15). I did this with my colleagues in the doctoral program who are doing similar research.

The transferability. This concept refers to the degree of similarity of "fittingness" between two contexts (Guba, 1981, p. 81). My theoretical purposive selection of participants was from a pool of practicing educators who would naturally express themselves in storied form and represent a mix of gender, backgrounds, life stages, and career stages. Thus, I sought out a breadth of possible reality constructions. Though my findings are not generalizable to other contexts, they may, through transferability, have relevance for other educators.

As Van Manen (1984, p. 51) stated, in telling our own story of lived experience, we know that our experiences are also the possible experiences of others. Agreeing with Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p. 7), Weick (1996) concluded, "The more explicit, dense, and concrete my description, paradoxically, the more resonance there is with the human condition in general. To understand one group well is to understand many almost as well" (p. 576). To enhance the prospect of transferability, I sought out data that did not fit emerging patterns, thus expanding the breadth of shared knowledge being generated.

The dependability. This concept relates to the logical unfolding of the method and process of inquiry. The dependability of this study was enhanced by my use of the "outsider audit" (Glesne & Peshkin 1992, p. 147) and "peer debriefing" (Guba &

Lincoln, 1989, p. 237). Both were mentioned previously in the section on credibility; the outsider audit refers to the "audit book" concept, and peer debriefing refers to my consultation with qualified peers not involved with the study who were able to provide advice and insight. Owens (1982) labeled this concept of an external audit as a "dependability audit" (p. 13), a technique I used in this research to "document the logic of process and method decisions" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 242).

The confirmability. Guba and Lincoln (1989, p. 243) said that this concept relates to assurances that the integrity of the findings is rooted in the field texts themselves. As such, the "external audit" also supports the concept of confirmability by the auditor validating the integrity of these findings. Hence, as researcher, one must be concerned about this integrity and the possible effect one could have on the phenomena under investigation. However, because it is impossible to ensure observer neutrality and remove "observer effect" from the research process, I followed the advice of Bogdan and Biklen (1992), who suggested that researchers recognize their natural place in the process and get involved. They provided an alternative that I employed in my study:

> Since interviewers in this type of research are interested in how people think about their lives, their experiences, and particular situations, they model their interview after a conversation between two trusting parties rather than on a formal question-and-answer session between a researcher and a respondent. (p. 47)

Along with this, I did "practice reflexivity" (Guba, 1981, p. 87), endeavouring to understand my own perspectives and perceptions as researcher, and taking these into account while engaged in the study. As Glesne and Peshkin (1992) stated:

> It may represent the beginning of understanding, a necessary condition on the way to making the researcher's biases explicit and to grasping the place of subjectivity in research. Although we cannot absolutely specify what the sufficient conditions are for this to occur, we believe that the

> conditions relate to a personal encounter with self in the course of research. Aware that there is something to seek, to uncover, and to understand about yourself, you are ready to be informed through the research experience. (pp. 100-101)

An important self-reflexive beginning was to articulate my personal ontological and epistemological narrative, comparing this story to constructivist assumptions.

Of Authenticity Quality

Guba and Lincoln (1989, pp. 245-250) and Lincoln (1995, p. 277) also recommended the "authenticity criteria" of fairness, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity, and tactical authenticity for judging ethical considerations. Lincoln (1995, p. 277) described the authenticity criteria as being rooted in ethics rather than in method as are the trustworthiness criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These "authenticity criteria," described below, emerge more directly from constructivist assumptions than do the aforementioned, being constructivist analogues to positivist rigor.

The fairness. *Fairness* refers to the researcher's act of soliciting and honouring the different storied constructions with their underlying value structures. As I sought out a broad range of experiences and storied constructions that did not fit emerging patterns, it was inevitable that I would encounter differing axiological perspectives. However, through an ethic of caring, trust, and honesty, along with regular member checking, I believe I was able to avoid any conflict. The participants' storied experiences were reconstructed to our mutual satisfaction.

The ontological authenticity. *Ontological authenticity* refers to the benefit and self-development welfare of the participants in the research. The object is that they will

acquire a greater understanding of themselves and the experiences under study, becoming more fully developed human beings. A product of our caring and trusting relationship, the sincere testimony of the participants was evidence that the research had been a rich and meaningful experience for them.

The educative authenticity. *Educative authenticity* refers to the degree of learning the participants gain about each other, their storied constructions, and the meanings they attach to them. Presenting back to the participants my constructions of their respective stories and the themes and patterns emerging from the synthesis, ensured that they were well informed about each other and me. It was even easier for some of the participants because they were already well acquainted at the onset of this research.

The catalytic authenticity. *Catalytic authenticity* refers to the degree of action stimulated by the research. This would include action by the participants, the researcher, and the reader. For the participants and me, it is safe to say that we were stimulated to deeper self-searching as we endeavoured to understand ourselves and our world better. This process may go on into the future with new actions being aroused along the way. For the readers, I can only hope that they are stimulated to seek a deeper self-understanding for the sake of their growth and development as human beings.

The tactical authenticity. *Tactical authenticity* refers to the extent of empowerment occurring among the participants and other stakeholders, freeing them to act according to the above-mentioned catalytic stimulation. By fostering and maintaining an open, honest, caring, respectful, and trusting relationship with the participants, I was able to provide them the moral support and encouragement to follow their hearts.

Of Hermeneutic Process Quality

Another way of evaluating the quality and worthiness of this research "is to look within the process itself" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 244). Within the hermeneutic process, field texts are interpreted and analysed promptly after they are collected. The researcher's reconstructions are then subjected to the vigorous member checking noted previously, hence allowing the participants an opportunity to comment, elaborate, correct, revise, and expand as they see fit. This was encouraged among my participants and they indulged to their satisfaction. The result was an assurance that my constructions of their storied experiences were credible, a work of verisimilitude. Again, this outcome was a product of the relationship described in the previous section.

Of Narrative Quality

The research text meets the criteria of Connelly and Clandinin (1990, p. 8), being an "authentic," "plausible," and "adequate" narrative. It was designed for authenticity, being descriptive and explanatory, particularly rather than generally, and invitational with a familiarity that encourages the reader to connect with it. It is plausible in that it "tends to ring true" (p. 8) and present to the reader in a believable manner. Its adequacy lies in its narrative truth overall, that sense of conviction, continuity, closure, and aesthetic finality that brings it all together as a good story. It also meets Lincoln and Guba's (1990, pp. 53-59) criteria of having "resonance," or fitting with the assumptions of the paradigm; being "rhetorical," with classic qualities of effective writing; and being meaningful, "applicable," and "empowering" to readers. It is an authentic, plausible, and adequate story which is a "representation of reality for purposes of comparison . . . [and] sets of meanings which people use to make sense of their world and action within it"

(Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993, p. 7). My hope is that it will resonate with the readers' own experiences, drawing them to an introspection and vicarious restorying of themselves.

Of Ethics and Protection of Participants

As researcher, I was in control of the quality of the participants' experience, a grave responsibility indeed. Thus, in the process of gathering interview and written narrative data, the primary concern, above all else, was the welfare of the participants.

I orally explained the nature and purpose of the research to potential participants as they were contacted regarding possible involvement. This information was also included on a consent form that was signed by persons agreeing to participate. In this manner, I obtained informed consent. Confidentiality was ensured in that the data were handled and reported in such a way that they cannot be associated with an individual participant. Anonymity was ensured by having all personal identifiers removed from the data and by using pseudonyms. I had participants review the texts, ensuring that privacy issues were addressed to their satisfaction. In advance of the participants' final consent, I also advised them of their right to opt out of the research at any time.

In these and all other ways I assiduously avoided the possibility of threat or harm to the participants. As this inquiry concludes, I am confident that we have achieved my goal: "Both researcher and respondent feel good, rewarded, and satisfied by the process and the outcomes" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992 p. 87).

Method Restoried

Based on the story of an "educator becoming" in Chapter I and the "wisdom of an elder" in Chapter II, in Chapter III, the method is a "servant leader" who tells of our

journey and advises how we might best negotiate that odyssey of self-discovery. It tells us that our desired destination and the way we approach the journey depends on how we personally see and know the world and our place in it. It tells of a particular "constructivist" map, one with many possible routes, one that best fits the nature and needs of our party. It tells how we interpret our world, how we make sense of it, how our language affects that interpretive sense making, and how a storied route is the best one for this journey of adventure. It tells how we might traverse the storied path and then describes that path most suiting to the party. It tells us how to make the journey a safe, trustworthy, authentic, and memorable one--one that is good for the party travelling and the inhabitants of the destination. And it tells of the importance of protecting the party members' welfare during the journey and the panoply provided to them. It is a good story, one that got us to our destination with our mission fulfilled--an adventure completed.

As Glesne and Peshkin (1992) expressed, this journey of "qualitative research rests on the multiple purposes of illuminating, interpreting, and understanding" (p. 27) the phenomena being investigated. As researcher, my goal was to enter into the "storied" world of the participants and join with them, through a social process, in constructing shared meanings that are real and understood by both parties. The narrative inquiry method outlined in this chapter facilitated this process. Together, on a journey of discovery, the participants and I were able to gain a deeper understanding of ourselves and how we came to be educators. It is my hope that, through the process, we will all become better educators and better human beings.

CHAPTER IV

The Participants Tell a Story

There are diversities of gifts
but the same spirit.
--I Cor. 12:4, *King James Version*

Of Diversity

As previously stated in this research narrative, in order to tell my story well, I needed the assistance of other educators who would participate in the study. I needed their stories to help stimulate my own, and to join with me in creating a mosaic of meaningful shared experience. The rationale behind my participant selection is probably well captured in the telling that follows, a telling that holds the essence of my research and the aspirations I have for it:

> Once upon a dream, I saw people from far-off lands, islanders of the warm water seas, foresters of the timberlands, herdsmen of the tawny steppes, nomads of the sun-baked deserts, hunters of the tropical forests, farmers of the rolling plains, miners of the shining mountains, and urbanites of a bustling modernity. They came in an extended procession, people of many descriptions, shades of colour, and manners of custom. I saw and heard things that were unfamiliar to me, but was imbued with a realization of the richness and value in this diversity.
>
> Each one presented his or her cultural uniqueness as a gift, placing it on a grand, elongated, and elaborately carved wooden table. There were songs, dances, varied artistries, languages, and stories, all different and diverse. Then the table blurred, fading and reshaping itself into a cornucopia, overflowing with the untold riches of this cultural diversity. The "horn of plenty" soon refashioned, now manifesting itself as a banquet table awaiting a joyous feast. I saw the people gather round the table, coming together in a common spirit, accepting and valuing each other and their ways, as something special to contribute to the good of humankind.

Likewise, in their respective diversity of background, each of the participants came also as a gift, sharing it with me through story. Diversity among them was desirable for two main reasons: (a) With a heterogeneous array of attributes and experiences, it was possible to gather a wider range of information; and (b) it was possible to foster resonance without depending on sameness, thus also facilitating an exploration of dissonance. Hence, like the cornucopia of the dream, the participants' offerings, in turn, have enriched the product I now present to the greater community.

The participants. It is only fitting that the reading audience be introduced to these diverse individuals. Together, they are a purposefully selected group of five educators, a mix of women and men, chosen for their vocation, their interest in narrative, their differing backgrounds, and their varied life and career stages. In spite of the divergence among them, they all share one common feature: Each is a "born and raised" Albertan. As Miller (1994) advocated, the following introductions and stories help contribute "the surprise of a recognizable person" (p. 503) to this research text.

Daelin, the youngest of the group, was my 21-year-old "rookie," having just completed teacher education and avidly seeking her first teaching job in the K-12 system. This eager, dedicated, and confident young woman proudly carried her Chinese ethnicity as an Albertan and a Canadian. As well, she expressed a strong desire to revisit, explore, and strengthen those cultural roots. Daelin was raised and schooled in small-town Alberta, becoming actively involved in community sports and cultural pursuits as she grew. She particularly relished figure skating and volleyball, also spending some years in church youth-group activities. From an early age Daelin learned responsibility and cooperation with her siblings and parents in the operation of a small family business.

Emerging through some initial shyness, her vibrant personality was enhanced by her lively expression and regular infusion of effervescent laughter. Listening to Daelin tell her stories gave me faith and hope for a positive educational future.

Jancek was my 38-year-old "beginning educator," currently a third-year teacher in the K-12 system. He had spent the previous 17 years of his career life as an employee in a large private-sector retailing operation. This man was the proverbial "bundle of energy," with boundless enthusiasm, charisma, and an animated personal interaction style. He was raised and socialized in a large urban setting, as part of a close and supportive family that maintained close ties with his Ukrainian heritage. Resultingly, Jancek was very involved in community activities during his formative years, as a Ukrainian dancer, a church youth-group member, a naval reservist, and a hockey player. Currently, as a family man himself, he was immersed in various activities with his wife, his own children, and his "kids" at school. It was exciting listening to Jancek's stories, leaving me thankful for the dedication, energy, and sincerity with which he cared for his "kids"--the education of his students.

Maronja, in her early 30s, was one of my experienced teachers. She entered the profession immediately after high school and was now concluding the first third of her career. This deeply caring and sensitive woman carried a tremendous burden for underprivileged and "at risk" students, a concern about which she was quietly passionate. In her own gentle manner, Maronja was also a firm and indignant advocate against any form of injustice or unfairness she encountered. Being from a rural background, she grew up "near to the earth" in a loving, close, and supportive farm family. She had fond memories of gardening, helping with the harvest, and riding horseback in the annual

cattle drive. Maronja was well travelled, having lived and worked outside of Canada. She is an avid conversationalist, who loved to engage in meaningful and thoughtful exchange with those around her. Maronja's stories were inspirational and brought a richness and pride to my thoughts of being an educator.

Katrynia, another of my experienced teachers, came from a family of educators and an urban socialization. The fond legacy of her formative years lay in recollections of sailing and beach-combing holidays with her close-knit, loving, and sustaining family. From her earliest recollections she had always wanted to be a teacher, hence fulfilling that destiny as quickly as possible after high school. Currently in her early 30s, she approached the mid-career period. Katrynia was poised, confident, and articulate as she championed the cause of quality education for all children. An educational reformer, she was highly principled, faithfully living by and firmly espousing her convictions, even in the face of opposition. Katrynia's ardour was appropriately moderated by her caring, sensitivity, reflectiveness, and tolerance, and she always made a supreme effort to understand the viewpoints of others. Listening to her stories inspired me with confidence that good reform is possible and that there are excellent educators serving our children.

Pssoh was my Aboriginal "First Nations" educator, a devoted, industrious, and empathetic man with a wonderful sense of humour. Now into the 40s age group, he had served 15 years as an administrator in charge of a "band-controlled" educational operation. During his upbringing on the reserve, he was strongly affected by his parents and their interest, involvement, and influence in their local community education. Having a deep pride in his Native heritage, Pssoh became inspired with a passion to serve and care for his people. This passion led him through a number of "doors" that always

seemed to open serendipitously and lead towards an educational career. The doors also drew him back to the reserve, the community in which he was raised. There his mission became one of establishing and maintaining a quality education system, legitimate and credible to all observers. His inspiration was driven by a deep sense of loyalty and commitment to his community and people. Pssoh's telling left me proud of his accomplishments, filled with a strong sense of hope and optimism for the future of his people.

Of Themselves

This chapter was crafted to recreate the individual stories of each participant, derived from their telling to me. As such, the stories will be my "reconstructions," based on the "member-checked" analyses of their interview transcriptions and written narratives. I have borrowed the idea for titling these stories from McKiel (1995, pp. 81-82), calling each "my construction" (p. 82) of the particular participant's story.

Daelin's story: My construction. Although Daelin often "played school" as a child, she never aspired to or thought she would ever become an educator. In fact, to the contrary, she remembered thinking that she would *never* take up education as an occupation. She was not sure why she felt this way, but in response to a Grade one social studies assignment on career choice, she remembered selecting a doctor or nurse, two careers of which she was generally aware of. Neither, however, was a career for which she had a particular passion, nor one to which she had been encouraged to aspire, for throughout Daelin's childhood and youth, her parents were neutral on the issue of her career, emphasizing only that she should choose something that she would enjoy--

something right for her. Beyond that, they held that she should strive hard to do well in her studies and eventually at whatever career she chose.

Daelin remembered her parents expressing and showing their love and affection by providing care, sustenance, a safe environment, and the resources for her figure skating hobby and other pursuits. They were less communicative orally, not normally expressing praise and appreciation verbally, but rather, encouraging her to further excel when she advised them of her successes and accomplishments. Because of their demanding work commitment in a small family business, her parents were not able to see her involved in performances and activities as much as Daelin would have liked. She was sometimes discouraged by this and, as a result, influenced to strive for "the spotlight." In this way, she felt that her parents might notice and recognize her more. However, she did not let this discouragement keep her from continuing to pursue excellence in her school academics, extracurricular pursuits, and figure skating. In fact, she tried harder.

As a child and youth, Daelin had not been particularly self-reflective, never thinking much about her personal characteristics or career directions. However, a recent cultural study tour to China had influenced her to become much more introspective. She now recalled how, as an early adolescent, she loved teaching young children figure skating. Daelin remembered experiencing immense personal satisfaction in seeing the improvement and growth occurring among the children as they learned. As much as she loved to see them having fun, she also enjoyed being appreciated and recognized by the children and their parents for the contribution she had made to their growth and development. This experience was particularly poignant for her on the occasion when

she took her own time to give private skating lessons to a little boy. She felt powerful intrinsic reward in seeing the child grow and develop and in receiving the expressed appreciation from the child and his parents. As well, Daelin liked the challenge of finding new ways to help the children learn difficult skills and to keep them interested and excited. These attributes remained with Daelin and she now felt a deep, inherent, personal reward when she was able to facilitate happiness, fulfillment, growth, or development in others. She felt a burden for the welfare of other people generally.

Another personal attribute Daelin remembered was her flexibility and adaptability in interactions with younger children, teaching figure skating, baby sitting, and as a youth leader in a summer children's library program. She believed that this flexibility and adaptability are critical for teachers, who must self-reflexively observe what they have done, assess it, and remodel it according to the needs of the children for the successful achievement of lesson objectives. She currently employed these attributes in her student teaching and figure skating instruction, a hobby she had maintained.

Also, other people had always told Daelin that she was caring and patient. Once as a youth, she remembered seeing a little girl fall off her bike and hurt herself. At the innate prompting of her caring nature, Daelin immediately rushed to the child, consoling and helping her. She also recalled being drawn to small children; for example, seeing them in the "mall" and waving to get their attention, then taking time to interact, play, and make friends with them. She found that these actions generally got the child's parents involved in a conversation with her, appreciating her warmth toward their child. She also had great success as a baby sitter, exercising the qualities of patience, caring, and an affection for children; giving the children choices; and helping them fulfill their

eventual choice. People who know Daelin now tell her she will be an excellent teacher because of her caring and patience.

She, like many people, is subject to a certain amount of anxiety when speaking before groups of adults, but is very relaxed in front of children. She remembered this shyness and anxiety at public speaking when her parents would ask her to talk to a stranger, in person or on the phone. Daelin had high standards for herself, being somewhat perfectionistic and spending more time than most, ensuring that her work was well done. She described herself as being slow in doing her work because of her desire to create a high quality product, also tending to be harder on herself than she was on others. However, she was not competitive with others--only with herself.

In junior high school Daelin felt for a while that she would like to be a physiotherapist, and did some "job shadowing" in that field. Then, because of siblings in the science field, she considered pharmacy, also doing some job-shadowing there. Further, she even considered dentistry for a period. At the time, however, she again dismissed teaching, now because of her perception that teachers received low salaries. Nevertheless, it was growing out of these junior high school deliberations and her experiences to that point that she realized her innate inclination towards the "helping professions."

However, as Daelin approached the end of high school, she was still undecided respecting career plans. She had an inclination to take a year away from schooling and work at something else, thus gaining more time for decision making on her career choice. On the other hand, her parents had an expectation that she would go directly to university, without taking this time away. She never debated this with them, knowing

that it was a traditional expectation within her family and the Chinese culture generally. Although this probably caused her to rush her career-choice decision, this turn of events drew her to a very special high school teacher who deeply influenced her.

As she struggled with the career decision, Daelin had proactively applied to and been accepted at the university in both education and home economics, in a dietitian program. At this point she was assisted in her final decision making by the above-mentioned teacher. This teacher had gained the students' confidence, being a dedicated, supportive, caring, helpful, and genuine person. He used humour effectively and was welcoming, making the students feel comfortable and relaxed in his class, not reticent about approaching him. He also willingly offered his time to them outside of regular classes. Daelin approached him for advice in her career decision making, and he helped her assess her strengths and weaknesses and other relevant information about the prospective careers available to her. At this point she decided she wanted to emulate this teacher, who was a friend, mentor, and unofficial counsellor to all his students. Daelin wanted to contribute something back to the community as this teacher had done.

She recalled other positive experiences in her own schooling, where teachers did things that she would like to emulate as a teacher. For example, one teacher impressed Daelin with her creative and interesting room arrangements and general provision of variety in the instruction. She also appreciated a particular junior high physical education teacher and volleyball coach who went the "extra mile" for her and other students in the curricular and extracurricular program. Not only making her feel comfortable in class through his encouraging openness and firm and fair discipline strategies that were respected by all students, this teacher also showed interest in the

students outside of school. Daelin also recalled some negative experiences as a child in school that she did not want to emulate with her own students now that she was becoming a teacher. Examples are the public chastisement and physical striking of a child as a reprimand, something she had experienced, or teachers who assign student seatwork and then retire to the their desks, not circulating, monitoring, and giving the students individual feedback on their work.

During her formative years Daelin felt the experience of being atypical, not having the same school lunches, looking different, and having elements of another culture in her family life. She was sometimes embarrassed by this and often longed to be like everyone else, a yearning that caused her to stop using the Cantonese language as a youth. She remembered how some of her Caucasian friends, when accompanying Daelin to a Chinese cultural event, would express their discomfort at being the only "White" person present. She noted, "That's how I feel all the time." As a young adult, Daelin had also experienced racial slurs; however, she was confident in who she was and was not offended by these comments. Further, she now had a reawakened desire to reclaim her cultural heritage, something she had earnestly begun pursuing again. In the future when she has children of her own, Daelin would like them to learn the Cantonese language and other aspects of Chinese culture. Daelin felt that being from a minority group would give her a greater capacity to identify with the children and communities of minorities. She believed that it would be most rewarding to teach in this type of setting, because she felt a burden for children of minority groups and the disadvantaged.

Daelin recalled her youth experiences in church youth group and felt that this spiritual influence had left her with a strong value base, something she believed to be

required by an educator. Although her grandmother was Taoist and her parents were not religiously inclined, Daelin's choice for involvement in the Christian church was respected and supported. She now had a strong belief in God and attributed it to her church experiences as a youth. Although she was presently not attending a church, she had Christian friends with whom she discussed spiritual matters. Daelin felt that this church experience complemented, in a very different way, the values she had learned at home. Now she carried a belief in God with her in her heart.

Overall, Daelin was now very happy with her choice to become an educator. Since that fateful time in high school when with the assistance of her mentor teacher she "cast her career die," she neither reconsidered nor regretted her decision. And as she became more and more introspective in the examination of her past experiences and personal attributes, she was confident that she had made the right choice.

Jancek's story: My construction. Jancek believed that his Grade six teacher was an instrumental force in his becoming a teacher. This teacher, being male and a science specialist, fit the profile that seemed to be best for Jancek. He found that his personal bonding came more naturally and much easier with male teachers, particularly those interested in science, one of Jancek's favorite subjects. He was then further inspired by three subsequent male teachers in Grades seven, eight, and nine science, confirming in his mind his desire to be a teacher. Jancek said the Grade seven science teacher stimulated something in him which confirmed in his mind the desire to become a teacher. By the end of Grade nine all he could think about was being a teacher, for his models seemed to have so much fun as they taught.

Beginning in Grade six, his parents were astounded at the change in Jancek's attitude toward school. Contrary to his behaviour before, he was now the first out of the house in the morning and the last home after school. But Jancek's father, a very successful businessman, had aspirations for him to follow into the business field. Therefore, as he proceeded into high school, Jancek found himself being influenced by his father's desires as he chose courses, always filling his timetable with as many business-related courses as possible. He felt his dream of becoming a teacher being pulled away.

During high school Jancek was employed at various part-time jobs, a part of the work ethic his father had instilled in him. Although he had many wealthy friends who always had money given to them, Jancek had to work for his money. During this part-time work, he soon found that he had natural leadership and charismatic qualities, regularly being given positions of responsibility and leadership. In Grade 11 he gained a part-time job that became a career. This job was at his father's prompting, but from his father's viewpoint, it was to be only a temporary high school job, until such time as Jancek could finish business school and join his father in the business world. The job was with a large private-sector retailing operation. Again Jancek found that he rose quickly to leadership and teaching roles, often being asked to orient and train new workers. The job became central to him, and the hours he worked would have interfered with his schooling if it had not been for his energy and zeal. His parents were not even aware of the long hours and night shifts he was working on the part-time job.

At the end of high school, in compliance with his father's wishes, Jancek enrolled in business school, even though his real desire was to attend university in a teacher-

education program. His father was planning to purchase three new businesses for Jancek and his two brothers to manage, envisioning a partnership with his sons. Then, just as Jancek was registering for business school, tragedy struck. His father, in the midst of rejoicing and delight over Jancek's entry into business school, died of a massive heart attack in the family home, right at the knees of Jancek and his brother, as they tried to administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation to their father. This was devastating for Jancek, and despite knowing that business school was not his heart-felt choice, he followed the tradition of respecting his father's wishes and continued. Although it was a very difficult term for Jancek, he finished a year of business school. During this time his penchant for teaching continued to surface as he often found himself silently assessing and critiquing the teaching practice of his instructors.

Jancek returned to his job with the retailing firm after the year of business school and then began courting his "wife to be." In comparing yearbooks from their respective schools, she wondered why he had gone to business school and chosen a business career when his yearbook pictures were so often captioned with his stated desire to be a science teacher. He explained his father's ambitions for him, but also suggested to her that he must have had some latent desire to enter business as well. In retrospect, he felt that there had been a certain amount of self-deception in following the course his father had plotted for him rather than following his heart into teaching. However, he also acknowledged the joys and pleasures along the circuitous route he followed to teaching. Jancek knew that he had learned a great deal from many of his contacts and mentors along that path to becoming an educator. He sensed that this "roundabout" route had left him richer, making him a better educator today because of the experience. Now he

believed that this path to becoming an educator was probably in the grand design of things.

The attractive salary he earned at the retailing corporation kept him there after business school and marriage. He advanced to junior management and became heavily involved in the union as a negotiator. However, as the years passed he became increasingly disillusioned with the lack of ethics he observed in both management and union dynamics and the lack of opportunity for advancement without compromising his ethics. After 14 years at the firm, he bravely set out to follow his childhood dream-- to become a teacher.

Hence, with his wife's support he began taking night courses to upgrade and prepare for a career in education. Jancek found it too difficult to balance university and work, so he took a step of faith again and left the retail firm permanently. He spent his first two years of teacher education at a Christian-based college and discovered the spiritual philosophy appealing and suiting his person. He came to see Christianity as a foundational philosophy that pervaded all aspects of our culture. As well as enjoying the spiritual basis of this college, he also did very well academically through the two years. Jancek then transferred to university and completed the final two years of his education degree. The culmination for him was the wonderful time he had in practise-teaching rounds--he knew teaching was for him. Immediately upon his graduation he was quickly hired, even given a choice by being offered two teaching positions.

In reflecting back on his personality characteristics, Jancek recalled being a bit egocentric as a child, something he quickly grew out of as he gained education and life experience. As he grew he always tried to share himself with others, being gregarious

and charismatic, with an ability to influence others. This ability was used to guide his fellow students in the resolution of what otherwise might have become altercations or circumstances requiring adult intervention. Jancek now fostered this "intra-group" problem solving among his own students, encouraging them to solve their own problems among themselves. He taught his students that all choices have corresponding consequences, and that the individual is ultimately responsible for assessing the potential ramifications and deciding wisely. He believed that it is very important for the students to establish strong positive values and taught to this end in his religion classes at school. Because of his honesty and ethical standards, Jancek now used his capacity for "influencing," to help others grow and develop in themselves--currently, his students and others in his sphere of association.

Although his mother had always said that he was a "born leader," Jancek recalled being surprised at receiving awards for leadership, sportsmanship, and perfect attendance in elementary school. In spite of the surprise, this circumstance inspired him to work even harder at school, enjoying it more and more. Today he saw that event, along with his early memories of being coached in hockey, as the main influencers for his current passion to see others grow and develop. In his hockey experience, because he was slower in developing, he wasn't given as much ice time. This made him vow, as a current athletic coach, that all students would get full opportunity to grow and develop. This principle has also applied to his teaching, where he toiled to have all students maximize their potential.

Jancek's parents had high standards and expectations for him, but he felt that he did not get sufficient positive verbal feedback from them as a child and youth. This left

him with a strong desire to please others and provide service that was appreciated by them. However, at present he thought that he "has proven to his dad up above" that he was doing a good job in life, with his family and his students. As a youngster, Jancek was very involved in community youth activities, hockey, Ukrainian dance, and church youth groups, but with the long hours his father worked, his friends' parents often took him to his hockey games and other pursuits. He missed having his father there to see him grow and to share in his big moments of success. Overall, he remembered that both of his parents had been very busy in either work or community affairs and had not spent as much time with the children as Jancek would have liked. This caused Jancek to vow that if he ever had children, he would be present in their "big moments." Thus, he and his wife have been very conscientious time managers, ensuring quality time with their children.

Jancek commented that he and his wife were originally brought together by their involvement in Ukrainian dance and the Ukrainian Catholic youth group. His father had always taught him that his cultural heritage was very important and that he should not marry outside of this culture--advice he took, and was delighted today for having taken it. Jancek's wife was a solid support in his life through the career change. She supported him through four years of teacher education, also maintaining the home as they raised their three growing boys. He was confident the boys had been given a good upbringing, with both parents providing sound modelling and spending quality time with them. Jancek was also able to coach his boys on their athletic teams, something he had missed with his own father. Family attendance at church each Sunday was an important feature in their family life together. He and his wife read with their children and participated

with them in many family work and play activities. Jancek read authors who wrote about teaching and educating, employing their ideas in his classroom and with his own children at home. As his parents had for him, Jancek also held high expectations for his own children and his students.

Jancek had been a child going to a Catholic school in a Protestant neighbourhood, and he recalled the feelings of being picked on and generally marginalized by the majority. There was dissension and tension which affected him in community athletics as well as at school, given that the Protestant public school was adjacent to his Catholic school. He perceived this marginalization as unfair, and it left him with a penchant for justice as he taught, raised his own children, and interacted with people generally. Now he placed more emphasis on participation, individual growth, and having fun than he did on competition and elitism in his teaching and coaching.

Jancek also believed that one must market oneself to achieve one's goals in life, something his father had taught him. He employed this advice in his practicum rounds when he accepted assignments that were more difficult and outside of his specialty, all because the principals had confidence in him and offered him these opportunities. Jancek's father also taught him to challenge himself and not refuse offers or requests too often, because it becomes easier to refuse again. Jancek felt that he had people skills and a refined ability to work with children. Also, he was firmly confident in his beliefs, without being unyielding and dogmatic. He could also be the "devil's advocate" in group settings to ensure that issues were thoroughly explored.

Jancek perceived himself as being very self-reflective, a quality he saw as essential for a teacher. He also considered himself a very extroverted person, with a high

level of energy that flowed from him as he interacted with the world around him. This caused even his free moments to be "busy" free moments, but in the hustle and bustle, he still found time to reflect, currently doing some journal writing. He found himself becoming progressively more self-reflective as he grows older and becomes more experienced. Jancek's mission was to change education and the world for the better. He treasured the many thank-you letters, cards, and mementos he received from parents and students, which caused him to stop and reflect upon himself and his activities--as he said, "just to keep me in check with why I'm here."

In his teaching, Jancek modelled himself after his own Grade six teacher who had inspired him so much. He considered himself a "real hands-on" kind of person, being attracted to practical applications of theory. Accordingly, he provided his students with the same opportunity for direct experience with the world around them. Jancek felt that his purpose was not just to educate children, but to guide and mold them, exposing their hidden talents. He structured their learning activities so that it was easier for them to reach their goals and objectives. He also built community into his classroom environment and activities. He had always had a passion to serve, deriving great intrinsic personal reward from seeing his students grow and develop.

Jancek was very happy with his choice to become an educator and was also proactive in helping his colleagues to find the best place to maximize their personal development and performance as a teachers. He, personally, needed variety, diversity, and change in his work to keep happy and challenged. He believed that others should challenge themselves to stay on the "cutting edge." He saw himself as a positive-minded team player, something his principal had taken into consideration in delegating to him

the task of marketing his current school at its potential feeder schools. Jancek felt that his energy, enthusiasm, and charisma were appealing to the younger students.

Jancek believed in God, and felt that there is a reason for everything and a proper place for everything in the grand scheme of things. He believed that each of us has a role to play and he sought out that role for himself. Although he found it hurtful when someone violated his trust or wronged him, he had a desire to forgive and forget and put the incident behind him. He also tried to promote and foster forgiveness and rebuilding of positive relationships among others. He believed that God has a perfect time for each event in our lives and helps us find that perfect timing. He had extremely strong faith in the hand of God in our lives. Jancek believed that there is a time and a place for everything, coming to pass according to God's schedule.

Maronja's story: My construction. Maronja decided to become a teacher when she was a high-school student, a decision she attributed to her experience with a truly wonderful teacher. Prior to Grade 10 when she met this teacher, Maronja had not found all parts of her school experience enjoyable. Junior high school was particularly difficult for her, because she was regularly "in trouble" with teachers and administrators and far from wanting to be a teacher. However, this new high-school teacher was able to inspire and influence her. To Maronja, the woman had a different way of teaching and interacting with her students, being student centered and focused on developing relationships between herself and the students. Maronja came to understand that this teacher's interest in her life went far beyond her educational welfare. The teacher expressed caring and was deeply interested in her as a human being. For the first time in her recollection, she completely enjoyed the entire atmosphere that existed in this

classroom. She found her special teacher modelling ways that Maronja hoped she could emulate. She wanted to be to other people what this very special teacher had been to her, and as a teacher, she wondered if she too would be able to do this.

Maronja came from a stable, close, caring, and loving family. Her parents had always placed a high emphasis on the value of education and were very involved and well known in the school community. Maronja remembered their modelling, learning by reading to themselves and to the children and having the children read to them as they learned to read. They also continually made evident to the children the new things they were learning and the context from which it came. This modelling showed Maronja how one may learn continuously from various people in diverse ways and places. Although she did not have vivid memories of her early elementary-school experience, she recalled her parents telling stories of how, as a Grade one student, she had played school, being the teacher of her dolls and little brother. Consistent with her teacher modelling to that point, she was very strict, making her brother sit attentively in front of the small blackboard while she taught him reading and arithmetic. As time went on, in spite of her general lack of affection and enthusiasm for school, Maronja maintained sufficient marks because of the high standards her parents tried held for her. She was thankful for the praise, reinforcement, guidance, and modelling she received from her parents.

As she thought back on her narrative history, Maronja wondered if the teachers and administrators had higher expectations for her siblings and herself because of their parents' involvement in the school community. Although Maronja's father was strict and expected appropriate performance and behaviour, he also believed in fairness and would constantly listen to her ideas, viewpoints, and her side of the story. From this and her

own experiences, she developed a strong penchant for fairness and justice and was an advocate for their proper administration. She also grew up learning to respect all people inclusively, for with the small number of neighbors and a First Nations reserve nearby, she learned to accept all children as playmates. As a teacher today, it was important for Maronja to maintain this strong advocacy for fairness, justice, and unconditional acceptance of all students, no matter their background or situation.

She had unpleasant recollections of feeling singled out and unfairly prejudged as a trouble maker by some of her teachers, which only incited her to show them how bad she could really be. She also saw many examples of insensitivity, humiliation, meanness, unfairness, prejudice, and injustice perpetrated by some teachers upon fellow students during her school years. She was particularly troubled by her observation of racial discrimination acted out in the community and the school she attended. This was why it was such a revelation and pleasant surprise for Maronja to meet the wonderful, sensitive, caring, friendly, and "human" teacher at the beginning of her high-school years. Although she could not say that all of her previous teachers were necessarily deficient, none of them connected with her the way this special teacher did.

Along with a certain natural quality of stubborness, all of this had left her much more zealous in attempting to ensure fairness and justice for her students. She was particularly affronted when people passed on negative stories and assessments of others, especially students, thus setting up a framework of negative expectations for themselves and the listeners. She had seen many students, including herself, seriously harmed by this negative "pygmalion effect." Resulting from some of her own youth experiences, Maronja felt that she identified and had good rapport with the "at-risk students." When

relationships were established between these students and herself, she found the connection to be intensely honest and loyal--something she admired.

As powerful as her school experiences were, Maronja felt that her family socialization experiences were more influential in shaping her character. She saw her mother and father as a wonderful mix of people, who together provided a necessary balance of firmness and gentleness. Both her father and mother had very high standards in the lives they lived and encouraged the same high standards and excellence in their children. Both parents were sympathetic and supportive, but they expressed this in different ways. Her mother tended to provide "the hugs and a shoulder to cry on," whereas her father told stories of his own life in an attempt to help her understand her own. Maronja worked together with her mother and father and siblings in their farming operation. It took much effort and teamwork to create and maintain a prosperous farm, and everyone had roles to play. This togetherness, being able to work alongside her parents and siblings, spending so much quality time with them, provided invaluable modelling for Maronja. Her father was involved quite heavily in community service and spent many evenings away at meetings, but this did not bother Maronja because she was then able to spend another kind of quality time with her mother and siblings. She grew up knowing that one of her parents, and most times both, were always there for her. Thus, she and her siblings constantly felt a strong sense of stability. She was also very thankful for the kind and generous acknowledgement by her parents of the contributions she and her siblings had provided to the farm and family.

Maronja and her siblings shared in the farm chores, generally with the girls helping in the house and the boys outside. However, during the peak planting and

harvesting seasons, everyone was involved outdoors with operating equipment. Also, there was always a large garden to be cared for, work to which Maronja became accustomed. Now, as an adult, she sometimes still returned home to help with the gardening. A favoured memory for Maronja was riding her horse, helping with the annual spring and fall cattle roundup. This was a real community event, involving other families, as the cattle were herded to and from the summer pasture lands. There was never time or opportunity to claim boredom or lounge inside, so when not involved in chores, Maronja played outside a great deal.

Maronja was a very social person who liked to meet new people. She remembered being drawn regularly to interaction with other people and enjoying a conversation. Her family had told her that she had always been fond of conversation, having an affinity for verbal discourse. She saw the roots of her love of conversation in family mealtimes, when everyone came together at the table and chatted over the meal. She had especially fond memories of this occurring during harvest time and spring work when the meal would be taken to the fields and partaken together as a kind of picnic dinner. As well as a social pleasantry, conversation was also a means of analysing situations and solving problems. Sometimes it was also an arena for stubborn debate between Maronja and her father, something that dissipated as she grew to adulthood. She maintained close family ties, still enjoying and valuing the meaningful conversations she was able to have with her parents and siblings. These converstations helped Maronja better understand some of the issues she was confronting and keep focussed on the welfare of her students.

Maronja had fond memories of the storytelling that would take place around her family's huge kitchen table during her childhood and youth. Her father would tell stories of the colourful immigrant bachelor farmers of the area, tales of past events, and adventures of the people that brought life to the events. There would also be family stories that gave the children insight into their own geneological heritage. When she was a child, her parents also read stories to the children; however, Maronja's fondest and clearest recollections were of the orality around the kitchen table. She knew that she had gained a sense of the history and meaning of her community through these stories. Since she became a teacher, the stories of her past classmates and students further fueled the passion she felt to serve her students well.

During her childhood and youth, Maronja's parents always had high standards for her and her siblings, something she had carried into her own personal life and classroom today. However, as much as she valued rules, policies, and the order they bring, she believed they could not be applied arbitrarily. There are exceptions to everything, and the teacher must apply standards and justice in a humane manner, taking into consideration individual students, their situations, and the overall circumstances. She was a sensitive and caring person who placed high emphasis on being able to share a mutual deep understanding with her students. A natural corollary is that she had been regulary sought out and served as an unofficial counsellor for many of her students--a calling that she answered beyond expectation. Just as her students gave of themselves to her, she had spent much of her own time, travelled many miles at her own expense, and faced unpleasant confrontation, all for the sake of these troubled students.

Although Maronja felt that she had always had a desire to understand other people, this became much stronger when she travelled and lived outside of Canada. Particularly during her time abroad, she became more outgoing, wanting to meet and get to know the people she encountered. As in all of her travels, she did not want simply to assume that they would be like Canadians; but rather, she wanted to explore and understand them from their own perspective. Maronja supposed that she had always been somewhat intimidated by unfamiliar people and situations, perhaps because she was inherently anxious about the possibility of other people seeing her make a mistake or appear foolish. In spite of her growth, a certain amount of initial shyness or introversion continued to make her less outgoing until she got to know the people around her better. Once she became familiar and comfortable with her social setting, she was much more of an extrovert--something that was constant in her classroom. She now firmly believed that we must honestly accept ourselves, each other, and the mistakes we inevitably make in our lives, admitting these to those affected by them.

Honesty was very important to Maronja, something she attempted to live with her students. This value had its roots in her own upbringing, where truthfulness was emphasized and rewarded, whereas untruthfulness produced unfavourable consequences. She believed that if people are honest with each other, almost any situation can be solved. This honesty provides a basis from which to begin a resolution and a rebuilding. In her own experience as a first-year teacher, she recalled having made an error in judgement respecting a student discipline situation. When she realized she was in error, she returned to the student in question, admitted her mistake, and apologized to him. The boy's emotion-filled verbal response had a powerful impact on Maronja. He helped her

further realize the power in and necessity of living open, honest, and trusting relationships that allowed for risks to be taken, mistakes to be admitted and forgiven, and accomplishments to be celebrated.

Maronja described herself as having a striving personality, at some times verging on perfectionism. She demanded much of herself and did not like to fail, but admitted that she did fail many times. She desired to reach out to all of her students and somehow "touch them," making a positive difference in their lives that they would carry into the future. This was similar to the many ways in which they too had reached out, touching and changing her. She structured her lessons in a manner that would meet the needs of all students and also facilitate their "getting to know" each other. She loved to have conversations with her students, one to one or in small groups. She believed this was one way they could become better acquainted and develop rapport. She saw rapport, friendship, and relationship between her students and herself as the key to solving discipline problems proactively and setting the stage for all of them to grow and develop, hence reaching their potential. For her, trust was a critical element in dealing with people. Although trust must be tempered with rational judgement, she believed we should not lose our faith in people just because we have been hurt or compromised by someone.

Maronja believed there was a spiritual dimension to her life and the lives of others. She believed in God and brought some principles of Biblical teaching into her own classroom instruction. She held the principles of faith, hope, trust, and perseverance as fundamental to her being and interaction with other people. On occasion, in deep and personal conversations with some students, she shared her religious beliefs with them in

an effort to help them understand her and possibly themselves better. Overall, she was deeply satisfied with her career choice and sustained a passion to work with her students.

Katrynia's story: My construction. Katrynia grew up in a family of educators, with both parents being teachers. She felt that the educational career focus within her family had a profound influence on her destiny to become an educator. From her earliest recollections she had always wanted to be a teacher. It was as though she always knew teaching. She fondly remembered, as a small child, watching her parents in their teacher work, hearing them talk about it, and now treasured the times she shared with them at their schools. In high school when her student colleagues were scurrying about to determine their career directions, it was no issue to Katrynia--she knew where she was going.

She was raised in a large urban setting, belonging to a close, loving, and supportive family. Both of her parents were very involved in and committed to their teaching, so it was difficult for her to separate home experiences from school experiences. Her parents' commitment involved regular family trips to school on weekends, where her mother did preparation work for her elementary students. She remembered these as sacred times, times of family togetherness, times of helping and working together, putting up bulletin boards, and doing various errands. She also remembered, with great fondness, the weekends and summer holidays of family togetherness and adventure as they went sailing with the family boat. Sailing was a joyous time of togetherness and fellowship for Katrynia and her family. She also remembered her mother reading favourite storybooks to her and her siblings on long ferry-boat rides, and family storytelling as they travelled together by automobile to and

from these coastal holiday stints. In her close-knit family, she affectionately remembered walks along beaches, all holding hands and "beachcombing," something she was now trying to capture and preserve in her poetry. To this day she tenderly treasured the keepsakes and mementos of this happy summer holiday beachcombing.

Katrynia's parents had high expectations for their children. There was an expectation that they would go to university, and great emphasis was put on careful attention to school work. For example, they were not allowed to have part-time jobs during school years, because that would interfere with optimal school performance. She felt that her mother had aspirations for her to become a teacher, but never confined her within this. Instead, her parents provided her with daily life modelling, which inspired her to move toward her own dream of becoming a teacher. In her current work as a teacher, Katrynia experienced more professional pressure from outside her family, where she occasionally sensed an expectation that she must emulate her mother as a successful educator. Throughout her practicum and beginning years this seemed like incredible pressure, but she now acknowledged that some of this may have come from herself. Nonetheless, she sometimes felt that she must live within a "shadow identity," the result of following in the aura of her mother's success. Although she had profound admiration and respect for her mother, she did not aspire to be her mother; rather, she aspired to fulfill her own personal life story. Katrynia was the kind of person who sought variety in her experiences, needing to be faced with new challenges from time to time. She liked to try new things, even choosing uncomfortable situations so that she "stretched herself" and was able to grow. She embraced change and new challenges.

Katrynia was sometimes gently influenced by her mother to consider entering school-based administration. In contemplating this possibility, she was torn between two things: (a) the knowledge that she would be in a position to bring about good for a greater number of children than as a classroom teacher; and (b) her own incongruent feelings surrounding some current administrative philosophies. Now, however, she was content in her path as a teacher; this is not to say that she had ruled out someday contemplating administration. Further, Katrynia had confidence in the mutual respect, admiration, and pride she shared with her parents respecting their common dedication to making a positive difference in the lives of children. This relationship precluded pressure from her parents to pursue administration; rather, it manifested in an expression of their pride in her accomplishments, something they readily communicated to her. For throughout Katrynia's life, her parents recognized her achievements and gave her praise, reinforcement, and encouragement for them.

Katrynia did not have particulary fond memories of her own elementary school experience. Few of her teachers during this period inspired her to want to teach; rather, she was more inspired to teach so that she could save children from some of the traumas she had experienced. At the hands of one teacher, she recalled being humiliated when the teacher made public in the class that she had the lowest mark in an exam. Katrynia was usually very successful in school and took a great deal of pride in her accomplishments; hence she was quite devastated by this act. She also remembered seeing teachers guilty of showing favouritism, discriminating against visible minority children, and once lowering a little boy's trousers and spanking him in front of the class. These injustices and outrages were made even more poignant to her, for when she visited

her mother's classroom, she found it positively different. Also, she remembered, as a youth, visiting her father's classroom and being impressed at the love and patience he exhibited with his students. This was doubly impressive to Katrynia because her father was dealing with special-needs children, many of whom had very challenging problems. She was touched by his love for them all and his ability to embrace their differences.

Today, because of Katrynia's negative memories about her own early schooling experiences, she recognized the awesome power a teacher holds in influencing a child's life. She did not want her students, when they become adults, to have such unpleasant recollections resulting from her actions. She believed that children remember more deeply how they were treated and cared for, rather than the specifics of what they learned in a given subject area. For example, one of her few positive memories of elementary school was of an otherwise nondescript teacher who was reasonable and flexible in her handling of students, being fair to all and not having favourites. These early recollections and stories made her all the more cognizant of the grave responsibility she had as an educator and continued to shape her teaching behaviour today.

Katrynia had one teacher in junior high school and one in senior high school who were tremendously positive influences on her, both having a significant impact on how she had been shaped as a teacher. One of these teachers was very empathetic, understanding, accepting, and supportive of her students. She also took a special interest in the students as people and associated with them outside of school, allowing her students to see her "nonteacher" side. The other teacher shared many of the same qualities, but was especially remembered by Katrynia for the faith she placed in her students. She took the time, showing care, positiveness, and sensitivity in grading

assignments and providing feedback. Katrynia felt that it was important to return and let these teachers know about the favourable impact they had had on her, something she faithfully did.

Katrynia believed that, to be a good teacher, one must be drawn to it by some profound sense of wanting to make a difference in the lives of children. She felt that if this motivation was not present, then conditions were ripe for these awfully negative things to be perpetrated against children. Also, she recognized that not all people have the personality characteristics to equip them for work in a caring profession. She thought that this motivation grows out of one's natural make-up and experiences during home and school socialization. Knowing that all people make mistakes, Katrynia was always very self-reflective, carefully scrutinizing her own actions and poised to go back to a child and make amends if she felt she had somehow inadvertently marginalized them in some way. If she sensed that she had erred in her interactions with a child, she believed in forthrightly apologizing to that little person and ensuring that the relationship would continue to grow.

Katrynia was particulary drawn to marginalized children, having a special need to reach them and to nurture bonds that would make a positive difference in their lives. Katrynia wanted each child to leave at the end of the school year knowing that she had found worth in them and acknowledged their contribution to her life. She wondered why all of the educator mentors in her life now were people who had a "soft spot" for the vulnerable, something she believed not all teachers experience--but would surely benefit from. She believed this passion in her might have stemmed from her own school experience as a child when she was marginalized, being called unkind names, and from

her compassion for other children whom she observed being slighted. At the time, her response was an aggressive one, sometimes acting as a bully or being a "bossy" kind of child. However, today she had maintained enough of this assertive trait to be a strong and vocal advocate on her school staff for fairness, justice, and opportunity for all children.

Katrynia was solidly grounded in what she believed, who she was, and what she hoped to continue bringing to the teaching profession. She had always gravitated toward people who had a strong cause respecting the betterment of humanity, something that was so critically important to them that they were not easily shaken from it. She had very strong beliefs and was willing and able to stand behind them, even in the face of opposition. Although she was a powerful advocate for her beliefs, she felt that she was able to "see the shades of grey" in situations, but is not prepared to compromise on some principles. Katrynia consciously worked at reminding herself to be sensitive, tolerant, understanding, and fair-minded in her assessment of other positions that conflicted with her principles.

Katrynia firmly believed in celebrating the individual differences among children, and people in general. However, she saw competency awards as counterproductive, for in the act of valuing one person, they devalue the people who did not get the award. Katrynia felt that it was better to honour each individual's gifts and contributions to the larger community. She believed in inclusiveness, encompassing the differences, diversity, growth, and becoming of all people. In her classroom she nurtured a sense of "shared space" and honoured the people with whom she shared that space. She worked collaboratively with her students to establish all classroom procedures, including those

respecting grading and assessment. She tried to diminish that all-pervasive notion that people have to be pitted against each other in the things they do.

Katrynia had a spiritual dimension to her life. Although she became disillusioned with the institutional church after experiencing some injustice and hypocrisy, she believed in God, the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God, and in prayer. She offered prayers of thanksgiving for the rich blessings of abundance and good fortune she had had in her life, and she sought guidance in prayer. She valued times when she could be alone with herself and the Spirit, working out the questions and issues in her life. This was a time of solitude for her, and despite the absence of another human being, she felt a profound sense of companionship. Katrynia experienced this private spiritual time as a replenisher of her holistic self--an act contributing to her overall health. At times when she lost touch with her spiritual dimension, she experienced it as a loss of health in her being. A technique she used to regain her spiritual connection was writing in her journal, a deeply self-reflective and rejuvenating act. Her spirituality was an essential element to her life--central to her wholeness. She could feel a "spiritual sickness" coming on when she allowed herself to get too caught up in the mundanities of life, those things that are just not very important in the grand scheme of things. These mundanities pulled her away from the integrity of who she was and the kind of positive works she wanted to do in people's lives.

Katrynia never had any doubts about her choice to become an educator. It was the right decision for her. She was completely fulfilled and challenged in this career. She reflected on a poem she had long admired, expressing that well after we are deceased and our material possessions decayed, what will remain is the kind of a person we have

been and what kind of difference we have made in the life of a child. Katrynia just knew that as a teacher she could have this incredible impact on people's lives. She was amazed at this and believed that there was no other career like education. At this point, she could not imagine herself being away from children.

Pssoh's story: My construction. Pssoh's parents were both very active and influential in education on the First Nations reserve of his childhood and youth. His father was a respected leader and successful entrepreneur, and his mother was a school teacher. Education, generally, and "band-controlled" education specifically, were common topics of conversation around their kitchen table during his upbringing. At the time, Pssoh did not realize he would eventually be centrally involved, but from his earliest memories, education and band control were a part of his conscious awareness. He believed this parental influence had had a profound impact on him, which, along with his openness to serendipitous occurrences, ultimately shaped his career path.

Although he did not actively plan to work in education, it seemed that the hand of fate continually channelled Pssoh towards this endeavour. Upon completing high school, he got his first job in the field of economic development, something that led him to university studies within two years. The trials of his first university year were "a blessing in disguise," for they caused him to take time away, working in construction labour and seriously reflecting on his career future. Although he enjoyed construction labour and was successful at it, within six months Pssoh decided it was not for him. At this point he was moved to apply for a job as a Native Liaison Worker in a neighbouring provincial school, something he did for a school year, finding it rewarding and enjoyable. Then the spiritual hand of fate moved decisively. Pssoh was invited back home to administer an

educational trust fund, the beginning of his vocation as an educational administrator and leader in his particular band.

As the years went by after he accepted the first administration post, he returned to university, first completing a bachelor's degree in physical education and then a master's degree in educational administration. The master's degree came after he had left the first administrative appointment to accept a position as Director of Education in his community. These educational accomplishments were important milestones for Pssoh. Not only did he take great personal pride in them, but he also strongly felt that he had to have the qualifications and credentials to legitimize himself in the eyes of both his own community and the surrounding provincial jurisdictions. His strong desire to serve his community well, providing the people with a quality educational system, motivated him to work hard and persevere. Overarching his desire for a quality educational system was his goal for the band to achieve local control of their own educational system--a goal since realized.

Throughout his work in educational administration with his band, Pssoh has relished the challenge and uncertainty involved in undertaking new assignments where there was no previously established job description. All of the positions he had held began that way, with his having to "blaze new trails" in helping to establish and meeting the mandates of the band. One of the things that gave him the courage and sagacity to chart these new courses was the influence of the traditional elders on council. Pssoh believed he was fortunate to be involved with band government while these people were still there to provide counsel and wisdom, all in the indigenous language and cultural style. Now he found that many of the Band Council members were younger than he was,

and the old ways were in danger of being lost. Hence he became one of the few remaining bastions of cultural tradition, with the concomitant moral obligation to ensure its preservation.

In his various education-related jobs over the years, Pssoh particularly enjoyed his involvement with people. In his brief stints as a school liaison worker in a provincial school and a teacher in a band school, he most enjoyed his interaction with the students and teachers. As a liaison worker he was able to visit families on the reserve, getting to know them better and helping them with their childrens' education. This work caused him to seek out answers to questions and dilemmas related to educating aboriginal children, an area where he had now gathered significant expertise. In his first year as director of the band-controlled education system, he also taught a junior high school option course part-time. Through this act he gained credibility with his teaching staff and demonstrated leadership and role modelling to them. In his second year, the increasing commitment required in the directorship precluded a continuation of teaching and placed him in full-time administration. However, he recalled with pleasure the rapport and positive relationships he established with the students and the staff while teaching.

As well as being a social person, relishing the proximity and interaction with those around him, Pssoh was a statesman, demonstrating strong leadership abilities. These inclinations were something he had learned from his father by watching him interact in local social, political, and business activities. Those formative years of watching his father left him with internalized leadership skills that Pssoh was able to employ effectively in his current work. He still found himself sometimes asking, "Now, how would my dad deal with this situation?" One of the fundamental values that became

instilled from watching his father was that of fairness and justice. His deep need to ensure that fairness and justice were carried out was also strengthened by his experiences in his own elementary and secondary education.

Pssoh was among the first Aboriginal students from his reserve to be integrated into provincial schools in neighbouring communities. At first he found it very difficult to adjust and "fit in" but was able to do this by trying hard at it, regularly compromising, and accepting the existing ways. In recollection, he realized that he was the one always compromising, but he continued because it was very important to him to be accepted and be successful. In retrospect, Pssoh felt that he was even more successful at "fitting in" and being accepted than he was academically during this period of his education. In large part compromising and "going the extra mile" were his ways of dealing with the subtle and sometimes not-so-subtle forms of discrimination he experienced during these times. One hurtful memory of this period was of a teacher telling his mother that Pssoh "was a nice fellow but not university material." Ultimately, this proved to be a motivation for him to do well academically as he proceeded into adulthood.

Overall, Pssoh was able to cope and successfully complete his schooling because he had a strong, positive self-concept and was proud of who he was, who his parents were, and the good reputation his family had within and without the Aboriginal community. Even when he was faced with the inevitable occurrences of racism, he did not worry or feel he had to defend himself as a Native person because of this strong self-concept. However, it was necessary on many occasions to simply "turn the other cheek" or "look the other way" and say "Okay, I'll just have to put up with it." These experiences left Pssoh a strong and empathetic advocate for the students from his

community as they left the reserve to undertake education in provincial schools. Above all, though, he was always fair and just in his advocacy, making sure that the truth and wise solutions were found, regardless of the situation.

Pssoh had a deep and emotional sense of loyalty to the people of his community. He was motivated by a strong passion to serve them as an educational leader, taking them to a place of legitimacy and credibility as an educational community. This passionate loyalty to serve had its roots in his socialization on the reserve, where for many years it was the only home he knew. As well, it was the place where all of his earliest friends and family became known to him. When Pssoh left the reserve to integrate into provincial schools, he was welcomed back to the community without some of the petty jealousies that sometimes existed. All of these things, plus his pride in being Aboriginal and his strong desire to see his people flourish as a successful community, have kept him from accepting lucrative and prestigious employment opportunities elsewhere.

Pssoh was a reflective person, and at this point in his life as he looked back over the course of his career development, he saw the various "ups and downs," achievements and discouragements, as part of the natural unfolding of things. Past events that seemed disappointing to him at the time, now, in retrospect, seemed like serendipitous "doors" opening and closing at the proper times. Pssoh saw these events as moulders and shapers of his life course, ever channelling him towards the important work that he now did for his people. As he reflected back and contemplated the present and future, he found humour in these events and situations and looked for the lighter side, his stories always interspersed with liberal amounts of laughter. Pssoh was also a spiritual person, believing that the hand of God was active in this moulding and shaping. Because he saw

this natural unfolding of things, he remained a flexible and adaptable person, ever ready to accept and make the best of situations and ever faithful about the good that would eventually manifest from them.

Having achieved local control of the band education system and firmly established a well functioning administration, Pssoh now had a mission to continually improve the curriculum and evaluation dimensions of their school program delivery. Knowing his limitations, he wished to obtain the assistance of administrative leadership with more expertise in this area of endeavour. He and his governing board had made great strides in bridging the community, staff, and board members together into a respectful and trusting relationship. The chaos, turmoil, mistrust, and misunderstanding that were initially present within the operation when Pssoh first took on the challenge had been eliminated, hence setting the stage for further refinements. He was instrumental in providing the leadership for this growth and improvement in the system and was affectionately called the "King of Compromise" by an administrative colleague. Fittingly so, for over the years Pssoh had learned well the art of compromise and negotiation, using it, along with hard work and sincere caring, to achieve lofty goals. As he said, these goals were all ultimately intended to improve classroom instruction and opportunities for students--the only thing that really mattered.

Participants Restoried

In their diversity, the participants tell us that their paths to becoming educators were each different, yet at the same time possessing many similarities. Daelin tells us that some people are not always sure about the career route to take upon leaving high school. She tells that when faced with this crossroad in life, it is sometimes necessary to

take a step in faith and commence journeying down what seems to be the best path at the time. Jancek tells us that it can be a long and circuitous road to one's becoming, one that is inevitably formed and shaped by those around us. However, he tells us that if one follows one's heart with trust and endurance, one can arrive at the right place sooner or later. Maronja tells us that the influence of one wonderful human "other" can act as a road-sign, calling one up short, refocussing one, and channelling one down an unanticipated path. She tells of a passion and burden to serve, growing out of her own experience. Katrynia tells us that sometimes people are inspired from the very beginning, knowing what path they will take, preparing themselves for that path all the way, following it in the end, and knowing all along that it was the right path for them. She reveals her strong story to live by, one that holds the individual and collective good of children paramount. Pssoh tells us that one's parents have a monumental impact on the development of belief systems and behavioural outcomes, and that if one is patient, vigilante, and trusting, "doors" will open and close, channelling one to the appropriate place in life. He alludes to a grand design that defines this appropriate place, one where an individual may best serve other people and the overall good.

Together they tell us a rich and varied story of life experiences and personal characteristics that molded and shaped them into the educators they are today. They tell us that these experiences and characteristics were profoundly influenced by those people around them, most notably family members and teachers. They also tell us that the paths to becoming an educator may be sundry, but at the end of each path, there may be purpose, fulfillment, and meaning as they serve humanity through the children and youth they educate.

CHAPTER V

I Tell My Story: A Memoir

Listen to the child who you were, who formulated
what you became, who still lives within, who
is now a part of what you are.
--McKiel, *Participatory Care*

The Call

It is one of those warm, quiet, and still late-summer afternoons of past years, where the air hovers thick and fragrant. A solid cover of innocuous grey cloud hangs high, gently imbuing the landscape with an ambiance of benevolence and peace. The soft earth feels tepid and moist as I lay, pressing my cheek into the side of the small crater. Having been thoroughly excavated by the "rooting" action of the porcine inhabitants of this five-acre wilderness, it provides a perfect cache for my eight-year-old frame. The ubiquitous willow clumps, with their ancient trunks reaching crookedly upward, form a leafy canopy above. They are sufficiently spaced throughout the range to provide small grassy spaces in between, the spots where my quarry have dug out and tilled these shallow pits, like the one I now occupy.

I slowly and vigilantly raise my head, tightly gripping my trusty spear of fresh-hewn alder wood--its name is "Thruster." With a careful bobbing and weaving I can see, around and through the thick willow trunks, the distance of a long "stone's throw." I scan cautiously, carefully seeking visual confirmation of the occasional sleepy grunts faintly audible to me. That herd of giant peccary are basking in their earthy wallows somewhere nearby, and I have a mission. A preemptive strike must be launched to preclude another of their destructive and frightening raids on my solitary forest dwelling.

Further, there is the ever-present quest for sustenance, something that would be satiated with a wild pork shank, spit-roasted over a slow fire. My mouth waters at the thought of it, and thus, momentarily diverted from the canny concentration of the hunt, I also visualize wild potatoes and carrots individually packed in mud and then baked in the embers. The source of those delicacies is nearby as well, beyond this swine copse, above the willow flat. And then to culminate the feast, there are those delightfully tart and sweet wild blueberries readily found over on Clemmer Ridge. And then I could . . . "crackle, rustle," my diversion is arrested.

I am instantly refocussed on the chase. Peeking over the edge of my earthwork blind, I see them, seven in all, ambling aimlessly as they foraged the forest floor. With their up-curled tails, inquisitive "oinks," and occasional vociferous squabbles over some culinary prize, they are moving toward me. As they draw nearer, I gather like a coiling spring with tensed muscles and focussed attention, readying myself and "Thruster" for the charge. Then the large boar senses something and stops abruptly. I freeze and hold my breath. With ears perked he stares in my direction, slowly and warily waving his head, the coin-shaped appendage on the end of his snout twitching as he tests the still air for my spoor. They have now closed to such distance that their pungence is also strong in my nostrils. It is near enough for the attack.

In an instant, the peace of the day is shattered. Like an uncaged beast, I explode from my lair, brandishing "Thruster" and savagely screaming my war cries. Simultaneously, the boar bursts forth a decisive "Woof!!" and the herd turns as one, fleeing off in a commotion of flying soil, staccato snorts, and frightened squeals. With animals darting here and there among the willows in their amusing choppy gallop, I

launch "Thruster" at the closest fleeing beast. It is a Herculean effort while on the dead run and as the lance flies toward its target, so I fly horizontally through the air, in perfect follow-through. However, in a form rather unreminiscent of the finest Olympian javeliner, I sprawl headlong and land, an undignified "face first," in another "hog wallow"--this one liberally laced with dung. I am in haste to check "Thruster's" result and resume the chase, but before I can extricate myself from this disgusting and malodorous resting place another sound wafts through the diminishing din. I scramble to my knees, listening.

It is a familiar sound echoing across the valley, a wistful and melodious voice hailing me: "Oh Hal, ohhhh Haaaal!!" It is my grandmother's call, that unique and musical manner in which she would always summon me from my outdoor exploits. The call extracted me from my fantasy world. My wilderness hunting ground was again the "hog pasture," my prey of giant peccary were again Gramma's pigs, now looking quizzically at me from a safe distance, and the potatoes and carrots were really in her garden across the pig-yard fence. I stood and answered her, happily receiving the message that it was supper time. After wiping my hands, face, and clothing with handfuls of grass, I collected "Thruster" and trudged off, much to the pigs' delight, I'm sure.

As I approached the house, up the winding path from the valley "barnyard," Gramma was standing on the porch watching for me. My grandmother was middle-aged, a big woman, strong boned, sturdy, and robust, well conditioned by the manifold farm chores she had attended to since Grandpa' passing. Winter or summer, it seemed her generous but solid girth was always draped in a light-coloured one-piece casual dress,

calf length, short sleeved, and of some modestly patterned print material. Although a few facial wrinkles and double chins hinted at her real age, Gramma's light-brown, neck-length hair remained totally faithful to her youth. Her self-conscious smile was always nearby, made complete by those pale blue eyes laughing through the gold "wire-rimmed" lenses. Her numerous "sayings" and the rhythmic inflections in her slow and softly toned speech betrayed a heritage south of the Mason-Dixon line. She was a woman full of love and patience for her grandchildren, a devotion I returned to her in "good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and overflowing" (Lk. 6:38, King James Version).

When I arrived at the porch, I seized the initiative and delivered the explanation I expected to be requested of me anyway. First, through her poorly stifled mirth, she delivered a gentle admonishment, for it was not appropriate to be "tantalizing" the pigs. I was then directed to a thorough soapy splashing in the wash basin, and a change of clothes, after which we sat down to the supper table. To my famished delight, there was ground beef hash, mashed potatoes, and carrots, culminated with a dessert of wild blueberry pie. In all ways this meal was equivalent to the one I'd fantasized earlier that afternoon. As was the custom, our mealtime conversation dealt with a multitude of topics. But as so often happened, our talk turned to my questions and her answers about faraway places, stories she had read and told to me, her life experiences, and generally, discussions about the world--about life.

When I was with Gramma I thought of those things: of distant lands, of exciting adventures, of the past, and of the future. Our frequent trips to her set of deep maroon colored 1947 *Encycopaedia Americana* volumes and the massive *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary* always answered any questions beyond her capacities. I heard the call when I

was with her. I heard the call of the world, of life, of learning, of the future--the call of my becoming. I had a truly special relationship with her, one that lives in my heart today. And as Gramma's call--"Oooh Haaal!!"-- drew me from my childhood fantasy world on that quiet, late August afternoon, so the call of the world and the future extracted me from my childhood and into the world of adults, responsibility, and careers. It was a call that eventually led me to the world of education, teaching, administration, and leadership. It was the call to become an educator.

The Background

I was born and raised in the parklands of west-central Alberta, that hardy land of four distinct seasons. It is a land where winters are severe, yet pristine and beautiful in their icy chill; where spring comes gushing in a joyous effusion of melting snow and newborn flora and fauna; where precious and hallowed summer mellows mature, warm, and rich, busy with life; and where autumn arrives with blue-hazed horizons and a blaze of coloured glory, diminishing away to stark, leaf-bare forests and a thoughtful stillness. It is a land that shapes people, the way they live and the way they think. It is from this land that I come, its imprint indelible on my soul.

I am the progeny of pioneers, emigres seeking a better life, adventure, and freedom to live in their chosen way. Four generations ago they began moving this direction, coming from Poland, Scotland, England, and the "antebellum" southeastern United States. They came as farmers, labourers, merchants, ranchers, and lumbermen, all fiercely independent and versatile entrepreneurs who ever sought out "greener pastures" in a quest to support their families. Through a variety of circumstances and stories, my grandparents settled in these parklands some 70-odd years ago. My mother

and father were both raised in the area from earliest childhood. Theirs was a pioneering upbringing shaped by small mixed farms, the lumber industry, one-room school houses, hardships of the 1930s depression, the trauma of World War Two, and scarcity. They chose to remain, raising me and my siblings in the same community according to the same economics and values. Financially, this spelled a decided lack of affluence, but from a general well-being perspective, there was an abundance of homegrown food, comfortable shelter, neighbourly fellowship, and a proud, self-sufficient resourcefulness.

It was into this milieu that my mother delivered me, the eldest of five children, two of whom I knew and loved as infant brothers, only to have them taken from us, succumbing within their first year of life. This left my only brother, older than the aforementioned but still four years my junior. He was my loyal childhood playmate and companion, but as an older brother ridden with sibling rivalry, I would sometimes mercilessly taunt him. It was a behaviour I continue to regret up to the present; however, I am thankful to say that he must be rich in the capacity to forgive, for we emerged from childhood and youth as mutually-respectful friends. Much later we were both blessed with a special little "after-thought" sister, born when I was 17 years old. She provided a happy focus to our family life, one we all gathered around in love and fellowship.

In spite of many hardships and disappointments, my parents provided us a safe, secure, and loving home. It was a home where high standards, lofty expectations, and propriety were exalted and emphasized. It was a home where education and hard work were valued and viewed as the means to a better and easier life. It was a home where my parents modelled these virtues and demanded compliance with their spirit. Although I was often in rebellious disagreement, I am now thankful for their provision of that gift. It

was a gift that lay within me, ripening and fermenting during my formative years, gradually and finally emerging as the fine aged wine of maturity. It is a vintage that has served me well as I minister unto humankind.

Although I have early memories of attending Christian worship services, we were not a church-going family. Nonetheless, my parents and grandparents led us to understand the reality of a universal creator, and to respect, honour, and cherish the handiwork of creation. From early childhood I have vivid memories of sensing the presence of God throughout nature and recognizing the goodness and rightness of harmony with Deity. We were an extended family where grandparents played a crucial role in nurturing the children, and where aunts, uncles, cousins, and neighbours were valued and influential in our socialization. Within the broader neighbourhood, notwithstanding the inevitable petty social politics with their attendant antagonisms, generally speaking, we were a community, mutually helpful and supportive. It was a good place to be, a good place to be raised, and a good way to be raised. It was a socialization that prepared me to face the world.

The Beginnings

Prior to my first memories, thanks to family stories, I know myself as a curious, active, and precocious toddler, learning to walk and talk at nine months of age. Shortly after learning to walk and talk, I am told that I was scratched by the pet cat while playing with it. According to my parents' telling, my retaliation was swift, calculated, and decisive as I promptly hoisted the cat, carried it to the "slop pail," and unceremoniously dumped it in, exclaiming firmly, "There!!" My earliest recollections emanate from a period when I was between three and four years of age. These begin with Mom, Dad,

and me living together on a picturesque farmstead occupying the plateau immediately above a wooded creek valley. There was a small grey house, cozy and inviting; a red hip-roof barn with a hay loft, easily accessible to a small child; and a few other out-buildings. A black Scotch terrier named Scotty served as the resident farm dog, sharing the locale with reddish brown chickens, half a dozen milk cows, a "handful" of pigs, and the respected team of horses, Major and Flicka. It was a realm through which I shadowed my father as he went about his farming activities. In this time, being before my brother was born, I had the undivided love and attention of Mom and Dad. This left me feeling warm, secure, happy, and at peace with my small world. I was in my glory, harmoniously integrated into the universe, consciously whole, and full of the joy of life. I believe the legacy of this period is a solid grounding, a firm foundation serving as a base from which I could engage the world.

The next three years provided changes and uncertainties. In order to make the kind of living my father desired for us, it was necessary for him to supplement the agricultural income with a job off the farm--a trend that would continue for the remainder of his life. First we moved to another farmstead while my father worked away in a lumber mill. This was a less happy time. Dad was not home and the new farmstead, destined to be our permanent home, was less well developed than the first. This, along with the loneliness of Dad being away, made it difficult for my mother to do the farm chores and care for the home. In addition to me, now four-and-a-half years old, Mom now had my toddler brother to care for as well. I occasionally sensed and shared her anxiety, loneliness, and despair; hence it was a happy and welcome adventure when we moved to the mill camp village where my father worked. It was in a wilderness area, and

I recall hearing the wolves howl at night, a captive bear cub in a neighbour's horse barn, and being afraid to attend the outdoor toilet after dark. However, this wilderness experience left me with a taste for further exploration--of the world and of life.

During these beginning years, the days weeks and months are permeated with memories of exciting visits to and from grandparents and other relatives or neighbours; of being read to by my mother and grandmother; of adventurous outdoor activities with my father, uncles, and neighbours. I remember enjoying listening to the tales of their exploits with the world as we sat around kitchen tables and lounged in "front room" chairs and "chesterfields." As much as I enjoyed play with cousins and other children, I seemed to long for drinking in the wisdom and experience of the adults. I listened, thought, dreamed, and then acted out these envisionings as I engaged in play, be it solitary or with other children. I was a hunter, a soldier, a pre-industrial tribesman, a farmer, a fisherman, a truck driver, a pilot, or a "cat-skinner," a colloquialism for the operator of a large steel-tracked tractor. Also, a much-cherished neighbour always suggested that I should become a doctor so I could heal her arthritis, and I remember compassionately wishing I would do that as I watched her manage with gnarled hands and awkward gait. In these ways I playfully contemplated careers and the world of vocation. The quest for knowledge, learning, and experience was at work within me, already becoming a driving force in my young being.

The School Years

It was a beautiful late summer morning, sunny and fresh with the scent of ripening vegetation in the air. The birds twittered as my mother walked with me, down the "lane," to catch the school bus. It was my first day of school, and I was "decked out"

in new running shoes and a colourfully illustrated, rectangular metal, *Roy Rogers* lunch kit. There were also new trousers, shirt, and jacket, but the crowning glory was definitely the shoes and lunch box. I heard the bus approaching, and in a moment of apprehension, realized that I would be forced into a new setting with many children I did not know. Not having been socialized around large groups of unfamiliar children, I was quite shy and withdrawn in new social settings. My small circle of neighbours and cousins was well known to me, but I became increasingly nervous and anxious as I was forced from the safety of that familiarity. I remember Mom consoling me that there were older children on the bus whom I already knew, and, "after all," Grandpa was the driver. I was somewhat relieved and gingerly prepared myself to board the small yellow panel van that served as my first school bus. My formal educational journey had begun.

The year was 1955, and the school bus was a new phenomenon. This was the first year that the rural, one-room schools would not operate in my community. The trend towards regionalization had begun, and "us country kids" would now be transported to town for our schooling. My parents had prepared me well for the idea of school, with much talk amongst ourselves and neighbours, of walking in groups or riding in a small horse-drawn "democrat" to our local one-room school house. In retrospect, I feel a certain remorse in having missed the opportunity to experience, at least temporarily, that aged tradition of attending the local one-room school house. However, in spite of roads that regularly contained seasonal impassabilities--namely, "mud-holes" and snow drifts--the bus usually made it to and from school. However, until roads were improved by the time of my entrance into senior high school, it was a regular occurrence to be dropped off and left to walk over certain portions.

My schooling was filled with good and bad experiences. There were some wonderful teachers, some mediocre teachers, and some terrible teachers. The same could be said of the students with whom I shared 12 grades of educational and social development. There were the inevitable bullies, the deceit artists, and those politically accomplished at forming social alliances with the sole intent of perpetrating mental cruelty upon those outside their coalition. It is with regret that I must admit occasionally being party to some of these baneful acts, the result of peer pressure and a desire to be accepted by the majority. However, as the years passed, an increasingly powerful sense of remorse limited my involvement in malevolent endeavours. On the other hand, there were many admirable individuals who enriched my being. There were the intelligent, strong-minded and self-confident individuals whom I admired and tried to emulate. There were wonderfully sensitive and caring friends who were always there, supportive, empathetic, and sympathetic, living out the compassion that was also deep within me. With the support of caring friends and teachers, I gradually learned how to manage and cope with my rather sensitive and anxious nature, something I began to find I had more of than most others.

I was an academically gifted student who normally learned quite quickly. I had a particular affinity for the social sciences and humanies generally, but especially history and literature. My "favourite hate" was mathematics, but in spite of this I could always discipline myself to achieve an acceptable level in that subject as well. However, my overall achievement seemed to vary proportionally with the quality of the teacher. One year I would have honours standings in all subjects with an outstanding teacher, and another year I would be in danger of "failing" with a weak teacher. In retrospect, my

assessment of "weak and strong" in teachers, seemed to hinge on the individual attention, monitoring, assistance, discipline, and sincere caring they demonstrated in their interactions with me. Enigmatically, of those teachers I perceived as "strong," I also remember most fondly their "storytime" period which occurred faithfully each day, right after "noon hour." Although I am sure all elementary teachers read or told stories to their students, it is the stories of these wonderful teachers that remain in my memory. Storytime was a beloved institution, one where I was enraptured, again hearing that call of the world, of life, and of my future.

Throughout my schooling, though, my greatest loves were free play and games, evolving into sports as I moved into upper elementary school and beyond. In free play I was a "man of action," having a particular penchant for "playing guns" while riding "stick" horses. "Cops-'n'-robbers" or "cowboys-'n'-Indians" were also favoured action fantasies during our noon-hour play and the occasional school holidays when a few little boys were able to convene. We would regularly live out our imaginary battles in the small woodlot contiguous to the school yard. This area was occasionally declared "off limits" by the teachers if our clashes became too intense, driving the offended ones complaining to a supervisor. Towards the end of my childhood play career and before the full advent of serious athleticism, I found myself more and more inclined to take the "underdog" role in our clashes. In Grades four, five, and six, I was regularly the leader of the Indian band, and we regularly won battles. The desire to achieve highly and win was definitely a large part of me. I was a competitive person, with a penchant to bring the marginalized and least favoured to victory.

In junior and senior high school, I lived for athletics. Track and field, baseball, football, basketball, volleyball, and hockey were my *raison d'etre*. In my "small pond," I was a "big fish," being among the most athletically gifted. I regularly won the school's "Outstanding Athlete" award during these years. Meanwhile, I was also introduced to music, taking lessons on the accordion at my parents' request. However, I quickly established a preference for the guitar and undertook the challenge of learning it on my own. Using my rudimentary musical knowledge to that point, my brother's six-string acoustic, and his lesson materials, I quickly learned the instrument. With a mountain of enthusiasm and desire, the encouragement and help of my parents, and the willingness of three musical friends and their parents, we formed a small orchestra. We maintained this "dance band" throughout our high school years, enjoying it immensely and making abundant spending money in the process. I also exhibited leadership skills throughout junior and senior high school, being regularly elected team captain, class representative, to various student council positions, and finally, student council president in my two senior years.

I was routinely on good terms with my teachers as I became more and more mature, less prone to childish misbehaviours, and increasingly responsible in the passing of my high school years. I particularly valued and appreciated those teachers who were my athletic coaches, and was influenced by them. When I observed the dedication, skill, and sincerity with which they endeavoured to help us succeed and achieve excellence, I gradually evolved a desire to emulate them. Although I had never before thought of education as a career, by Grade 12, I found myself thinking, "I'd like to come back and give kids this opportunity." It was an opportunity that I had been so often deprived of

because of unwilling or incapable teacher sponsors. Further, the thought of being a physical education teacher somehow appealed to me. I could be involved both as an instructor, teaching the activities I loved so much, and as a coach, refining my athletic teams and individuals to perfection and then competing for victory.

Up to this time, the only thoughts of vocation had been my passive but unrealistic thoughts of petroleum engineering and my occasional military inklings, wanting to be an air force pilot. The military option was the influence of a number of uncles and neighbours who had served in the armed forces. My interest in the air force came from two admired uncles and a friend of the family. My eldest uncle had been a Lancaster bomber pilot, in active service during WW II, something of which I was deeply proud. A younger uncle had been in the air force during the mid '50s as an "air-frame technician." His "best buddy," also a close friend of the family, served with my uncle and subsequently gained his wings as a "jet" pilot. Again, both of these men were a source of pride for me, and I wanted to be like them.

The petroleum engineering consideration came from my father, who was interested in the oil industry, having worked in that domain after the demise of the lumbering industry. Also, I had a lingering fascination with the general concept of engineering because one grandfather had training as a steam engineer, and one uncle had served with the civil engineering corp overseas during WW II. My father's experience caused him to espouse the virtues and opportunities in petroleum engineering, something that I seriously considered until my lack of penchant for mathematics and mathematically related sciences became blatantly evident to me. However, my parents and most influential extended family members never pressed me to consider one career over

another. The only expectation was that I continue with some form of advanced education or training beyond high school. Hence, by the end of Grade 12, I had determined to enter university and train to become a physical education teacher.

The Shaping Forces

Aside from the general influence of my coaches and physical education teachers, there was no singular experience that seemed to make me decide on a vocation. Hence, I believe my call to become an educator manifested out of those indwelling qualities and traits making up my being. My personality characteristics and life experiences are storied fibres that are spun together into threads of narrative unity where it is impossible to determine whether the trait influenced the experience or the experience shaped the trait. It is safe to assume that both influenced each other, weaving an inextricably interrelated and complex warp and woof of shaping forces that formed me into an educator. It is a process that has continued up to the present and will persist into the future.

The narrative threads I perceive as having been influential in shaping my becoming are a deep sensitivity and caring for people; an inclination to bring about peace, harmony, and goodwill among people; a capacity to forgive; a desire to serve people for the greater good and to be viewed affectionately, receiving recognition for my efforts; a striving for fairness, justice, and egalitarianism; and a zeal to succeed and excel in these and all other endeavours. Entwined within and throughout the aforementioned characteristics is a "playfulness" or desire to have fun and enjoy humour as I interact with my world.

Following are the stories relating to these narrative threads. For each trait there are two stories of an experience that manifested, exposed, or influenced it. One is from my childhood, as the first remembered experience with that particular trait. The second is of a current experience, in my role as a school superintendent.

Caring and sensitivity. Although my early years manifested some of the selfishness, laziness, and hedonism often associated with the immaturity of childhood, my caring and sensitivity towards others began to show through. A fairly high level of sensitivity about how others perceived me and an anxiety about new social settings had always been my companions. But from the age of eight, in Grade three, I have my first memory of knowing myself as sensitive and caring toward people outside my comfortable social circle. At that time I experienced what I now perceive as a strange metaphysical phenomenon, raising to my conscious level the compassion I had for other human beings. Our classroom was being visited by the superintendent of schools and he was delivering a spelling quiz to us while our teacher looked on. In the midst of my anxiety to do well on the quiz and the concomitant nervousness, I recall I had riveted my attention on the man. His manner of speech was such that it was difficult for me to tell whether he had pronounced a "w" or a "wh" sound. Being far too shy to ask, I was intently trying to determine whether he had said "wear" or "where," when he paused, took a white handkerchief from his pocket, and gently wiped his nose.

At that instant I was enchanted and overcome with a most pronounced and poignant sense of compassion for him, greater than I had ever felt for anyone before. There, at the front of my classroom, sat this balding, bespectacled man, that I had never seen before, clad in a milk-chocolate coloured suit, and I was feeling this odd sensation

towards him. It was something like "feeling sorry" for him, but there was no reason for this to be happening. I had experienced a deep sense of love and affection for family members before, but this had never happened. Frankly, I was troubled at this new and powerful sensation but quickly "shook it off" and proceeded to challenge the spelling quiz.

Since that time I have experienced that same powerful sensation many times, often in the most unexpected or unexplainable of situations: in a crowd of strangers; observing another motorist while driving; formally observing children and teachers in classrooms, on a busy street, or in a restaurant full of people. Occasionally, it occurs, to my delight, when I am working with people in small groups or one-on-one. The experience is always characterized by my inner or "spiritual" attention being involuntarily focused on an individual person, for whom I then consciously feel a deep, puissant caring and compassion.

My adult response to this phenomenon has been to pray earnestly for the individual to whom my attention had been directed. It has never occurred respecting persons I know well, but if it did, I think I would tell them what was happening and ask if they are in need of support. However, there have been cases where I am interacting with someone when the phenomenon occurs; I then ensure that we engage in a conversation. In this way I open the door to provide any required benefaction, in case that is what is required. On these few occasions the response of the person has seemed to be a sincere appreciation of my having interacted with and listened to them. Also, I have always left the conversation feeling uplifted and as though I have somehow fulfilled an important

mission. Still, I do not understand the genesis and motivation for this unsolicited feeling of caring and compassion that comes over me.

I now cherish this experience and welcome it when it comes, seeing it as an indicator of the care and compassion I have for people in general. I believe it is a message from the Creator for me to attend to that individual, and to remember to care for humanity in general. As an educator I have a wonderful opportunity to express this in a concrete, meaningful, and supportive manner to those around me. Recently, in my role as superintendent, I again experienced this powerful, "other-worldly" sensation of caring and compassion toward another human being. That story will follow next.

Our community has a "twinned" relationship with the community of Ashoro in Hokkaido, Japan. As a part of that relationship, our school division has engaged in annual student exchanges with Ashoro. One year we send a student-adult delegation there, and they reciprocate the next. Both communities use the institution of "home stays" to accommodate their respective guests during the exchange visits. One-and-one-half years ago I had the pleasure and good fortune to travel to Ashoro, where I, along with each member of our delegation, was treated like veritable royalty. Last summer my family and I--wife Sheila, son Aaron, and daughter Miriam--had the opportunity to reciprocate, as there was an adult delegation from Ashoro visiting our community. We had agreed to host in our home two men from their delegation. They were Yoshi, the Ashoro superintendent of schools, with whom I had stayed when I was In Ashoro, and Musashi, a man I had not previously met. It was with great anticipation and preparation that we awaited their arrival. Gifts, house cleaning, food preparation, and excursion plans were all in place when they arrived.

When we picked them up at their arrival, there was a certain amount of apprehension, for we knew there was a significant language barrier. But we were well prepared with Japanese phrase books and translation dictionaries. Their three-day stay unfolded beautifully. I was making my re-acquaintance with Yoshi and getting to know Musashi. My family and I were quickly developing strong bonds of friendship and affection for our Japanese guests. In spite of the hectic pace of their activities, both those determined by the city "Friendship Society," and the "free time" diversions we provided, we seemed to have time for good fellowship. As much as the experience was rewarding for me, it was somewhat stressful, mainly because I was engaged in doctoral studies at the university with a fairly stringent workload, during the same period. I often caught myself worrying and hoping all would go well, but feeling a bit powerless to do everything that I knew could be done to ensure success. It was very important for me to ensure that an excellent friendship relationship be maintained with our Japanese counterparts in Ashoro.

On the Saturday morning I had taken Yoshi, an avid and proficient golfer, to the local course for "18 holes" with one of our principals. Not being a golfer myself, I spent a few hours in my office while they played. I picked Yoshi up after golfing and proceeded home. Along the way we practised his English, and he expressed what a wonderful time he was having. He thanked me in that sincere and profound manner to which the Japanese are so given: "*Domo arigato gozaimas*!" His expression made me feel much more secure that things were really going well. As we drove up the driveway to our home, my wife and children were out in the yard with Musashi. Because he had preferred not to go golfing, Sheila, Aaron, and Miriam had taken him on a bicycle ride

through our beautiful community park. When I looked over at Musashi's smiling face, I was overcome with that "old" feeling of intense compassion. Up to that point, I had sensed that he was a person of impeccable character and had felt affection toward him, but this encountering was far beyond that. Something deep and metaphysical had again occurred.

I spent as much time as possible with him for the remainder of his stay with us. I found that his English was improving at a stunning rate and that he was a sensitive and caring man. He, like me, felt very strongly about our two communities continuing to strengthen our relationship in the name of international brotherhood. Something deep and wonderful transpired between us, and I knew that I would have another strong ally in working toward peace, harmony, and brotherhood, this time across the Pacific Ocean.

Peace making and dipomacy. I first recall my diplomatic character trait of "peace making" and "harmony generating" when I was a small boy also. Although I did engage in a certain amount of egocentric aggression as a child, I was never comfortable with it and always felt a significant degree of sometimes painful remorse after the fact.

From Grade one on a friendship had steadily developed between myself and another boy named Krysztof. Even though our relationship experienced its "ups and downs," I recollect always quickly getting over my annoyances and maintaining a strong affinity for him. Unfortunately, Krysztof was not as politically endowed at navigating his way through the peer group "pecking" order as was I. As a result he was often the physical target of bullies or other budding pugilists with whom he had fallen out of grace. I often found myself in the delicate position of trying to extricate him from a situation and keep from being attacked myself. For me this ongoing drama culminated in a Grade

six altercation where Krysztof had somehow managed to incur the wrath of Jerzy, the "arch ruffian." Nobody "messed with" Jerzy because he was the "meanest and toughest kid" in our class. He gave a new and enhanced meaning to *bellicose*, also seeming to take fair pleasure in exercising his physical prowess.

Well, there we were on the noon-hour playing field as Krysztof and Jerzy circled each other with their "dukes up." Knowing the imminent disaster about to befall Krysztof, I mustered all my persuasive verbal skills to try to talk Jerzy out of it, for I knew that Krysztof was too angry and proud to look for a peaceful settlement. My efforts to no avail, poor Krysztof took a sound thrashing with the predictable cut lip, bloody nose, and swollen lumps on the face. I'm sure that my anguish for Krysztof equalled the momentary abhorrence we both felt toward Jerzy as I attended to my wounded friend.

That particular event seemed to solidify, once and forever, my intense desire to promote peace and harmony among all people in my sphere of influence. The events of that day raised to the surface of my consciousness the realization that I could not comfortably coexist with conflict and the perpetration of violence upon another being. Today, as an educational leader, that translates to verbal, emotional, and social conflict or violence as well. I do everything in my power to maintain a peaceful and harmonious climate so that all energies can be focussed on helping our students.

Acknowledging that some conflict is unavoidable or sometimes even desirable, and that in either case it must be managed for the good of the organization, I still generally hold that harmony is better than discord. Hence, in my current role as superintendent, or previously as deputy superintendent, I have felt compelled to resolve conflict or mediate situations in order to preserve productive working relationships. One

incident that is particularly memorable and rewarding for me began early one morning while I was at home, soporifically preparing for the day. The telephone rang and my wife answered, expecting that it was probably a routine request for her services as a substitute teacher; but it was not, and as she called me to the telephone, my pulse quickened. For me, early-morning telephone calls at home usually meant some rather serious and exigent problem related to work. As I took the call my worst fears were confirmed.

The caller identified himself as Jozef, a school administrator, and commenced a tirade: "I want you to come as soon as possible, and I want him out of this school immediately. Its either him or me; I can't take this any more!!" I listened, albeit with the receiver some distance from my ear, and let him at least partially dissipate his negative energies. When he finally paused, I questioned Jozef as to whom the "him" was and what the problem was. He explained that, in an early-morning meeting with a staff member named Henryk, they'd had a dispute respecting some procedural matters. Jozef perceived Henryk as unwilling to cooperate with him in the way he wanted to administer the school. Jozef said this had been building for some time and had rather cogently culminated this morning. He requested my presence to intervene in the situation and assist him in resolving it.

Because this was in the era prior to "school-based decision making" in a small school jurisdiction, central administration played a joint role in staffing and personnel matters. I assured Jozef that I would come directly and had his agreement that we would meet as a threesome, discussing the concerns that he and Henryk had. As I finished readying myself and drove to the school, I pondered what could have happened to enervate the bond between Jozef and Henryk, for they had worked together so cohesively

over the past years. Theirs had been a solid relationship, contributing to an effective administrative and educational operation in the school. In my estimation, both Jozef and Henryk were decent, caring, sincere, hard-working, and effective educators. Thus, I set as my goal the resolution of this enigma and the mending of their relationship.

I arrived at the school and was greeted by a morose, perhaps somewhat demure Henryk and an angry Jozef. As a threesome we immediately cloistered behind closed doors, and I took charge. I expressed the esteem I held for each of them and declared my perception of their qualities. I asked to hear their concerns, explaining that they were too valuable a team to lose through conflict, probably the result of work-place stress and tension. I had each reveal their concerns and perceptions while intently listening and encouraging each to be forthright about his feelings. For an hour and a half I heard their stories, helping each to clarify their mutual understandings and assisting them mediate a solution. They were able to re-establish mutual understanding and, with apologies, committed themselves to a resolution of their strife. The problem had resulted from a continual build-up of misconceptions due to insufficient communication and false assumptions about each other's motives. This had been compounded by crises that each had recently experienced in his private life, totally unrelated to one another, but nevertheless burdensome to each. They both thanked me before I left and apologized to each other for allowing things to get to the state they had. I departed relieved and with a strong sense of fulfillment that I, for a time, had preserved peace and concord as it should be. This epiphanous communion with universal harmony would last for at least the time it took to return to my office.

Forgiving. Beginning with the incident where my friend was "beaten up" by a bully in Grade six, I began to learn another important life lesson in character building. As stated earlier, immediately after the incident I was consumed with a bitter anger, perhaps even loathing for the aggressor. In the many similar situations that were to happen, I would foster the flame of anger well after the fact, exacting a heavy toll on my inner peace. Psychologically, it was not an easy thing for me to carry about such ill feelings about another being.

As I grew and matured I became more and more aware of the excessive and painful burden it was to harbour such bitter grudges. Although I never sought any vengeance or retribution, I would seethe inside. To lessen my anguish, I tried not to think of the people or situations that evoked these feelings, which by my mid-teens were somewhat ingrained and no longer needed fostering. But alas, the various defense and escape mechanisms tried were ineffectual. In retrospect, I realize that I was a significantly burdened individual and certainly not at peace with myself.

Gradually, over the next decade, I was to struggle with my inability to forgive those I perceived to have wronged me or those in my circle of caring. It is true that I became less affected by the feelings as time passed, but it was not until I recognized and grew to know the benevolent and forgiving universal Creator that I learned how to forgive. When I did, it was a wonderfully emancipating metamorphosis in my life. I could now again know real inner peace, something I hadn't really felt since early childhood. The ability to forgive and offer up entreaties for those who wrong me is fundamentally essential to me as an educator. Along with my capacity to forgive, I have

adopted a firm devotion to absolute honesty. In order to forgive ourselves and others, we must be dedicated to absolute honesty as we negotiate the terrain of life.

As a superintendent, I am routinely delivered situations that require me to exercise forgiveness. Legion are the intended or nonintended assaults upon me or my circle of caring, our school division team and our students. Fortunately for most of us, the preponderance of these violations is not too deeply aggravating. Through the use of refined coping skills, one is able to "let them roll off one's back" like the proverbial "water off a duck's back." Forgiveness can be yielded up with the ease of an, "Oh, that's okay" comment. However, there are those that cleft more deeply, leaving one acutely injured and needing to draw on greater powers to forgive. One such incident coincided with my life path in recent years.

A few days before a major school vacation period, I was vigorously attending to the completion of numerous issues in anticipation of a 10 day reprieve from my office. However, as is so often the case, my best-intentioned plans were to be altered by events outside my control. Unannounced, a very determined man and woman arrived at Division Office, demanding an immediate meeting with me. My secretary's most diplomatic suggestions did not convince them that an appointment might be in order. Sensing major trouble, I did not make an issue of their lack of appointment and agreed to see them. Receiving them in my office, I introduced myself and affably offered the customary courtesy of refreshments. As I sought their reason for being there, an acerbic story unfolded of the injustices allegedly visited upon them and their child by the principal of their school. As is so often the case, they claimed to speak for "many" others who had the same grievance. The visitors, being of a particular minority ethnic group,

alleged that the principal disciplined and expelled children of only this group, while ignoring and "doing nothing about" the misdemeanours of the majority. They stridently accused the principal of a litany of grievous behaviours.

Through listening and gentle questioning, I determined that the man had been to visit the principal with his concerns and, according to him, had "gotten nowhere." Later, subsequent investigation revealed he had met with the principal, demanding a change in school policy and refusing to acknowledge wrongdoing on the part of his own child. The man also involved himself with the student discipline issues of other families, rallying them against the school as well. When the principal tried to manage the situation appropriately, that is, without totally submitting to the man's will, the retort was, "I'll have you fired!"

In my efforts to propitiate the couple, I acknowledged their allegation, promised a thorough investigation, but cautioned that all the facts must be gathered. Their charges of racism were serious and must be founded on trustworthy and triangulated evidence. "We must have evidence from all the staff, students, and parents involved," I stated, adding that it was not enough to go solely on the child's story. If in the end it was not possible for them to feel reconciled with the school, which I strongly suspected might be the case, I offered them means to access a neighbouring school. However, my mercurial efforts were in vain, and I quickly realized I was only exacerbating an already bad situation. Their inexorable drive to have the principal "fired" was inimical to any alternative voices of truth or reason. I sensed a crusade for vengeance that would not be satisfied without "blood." In my efforts to reason with them, they became obdurate and walked out in the midst of my offer to provide a meeting to air their concerns and those

of "all the other people." In leaving, the man assured me that we had not heard the end of this and uttered something about "TV, radio, and the papers."

He came through on his threat to go to the media. Within two days, three daily newspapers, ranging across as many provinces, had run stories. They earnestly and indignantly reported on the "racism" that existed in one small Alberta school. I was devastated and livid, finding myself engaging in fantasies of legal and political retribution; but, overcoming my baser impulses, I set about to ameliorate the situation reasonably, professionally, and empathetically. With the assistance of numerous caring, honest, and generous associates, many from the ethnic community as well, I was eventually able to carry out a strategy of successful resolution. Notwithstanding the debris of hurt, anger, suspicion, innuendo, and general social destruction, the situation was resolved. But resolution and healing began only after a wide and disputatious involvement of numerous communities of interest. A toll had been exacted.

I had missed my planned vacation; I was psychologically and emotionally emaciated; I had seen innocent people manipulated, used, and harmed emotionally and psychologically. School staff were feeling unjustly and unfairly maligned, with the principal carrying the brunt of the anguish. Years of hard work at building strong intercultural bridges in our schools was charred in the conflagration, which inevitably spread to another school. Students had been held hostage from school, missing an inordinate amount of time. All because of the anger and pugnacious, control-conscious ego of one charismatic individual.

I experienced many late-evening contemplations of "taking the gloves off" with this person and retaliating either legally or in the media. I was a seething mass of anger

and hurt for a short while and hated every moment of it. Then I stopped myself, reflected, and remembered my spiritual source of strength. In that "still, quiet, moment," I heard again the voice of forgiveness and yielded my anger, my hurt, and my desire for retribution. I passed on earnest entreaties for that man, myself, and the others who had been harmed. I realized that this man must also have a history of pain and disappointment that caused him to respond in the manner he had. I felt compassion for him and then found, deep within myself, the forgiveness that I needed. Again, I was at peace--a troublesome burden gone.

Serving and receiving. The narrative thread motivating me to serve people and enjoy receiving gratitude for it undoubtedly has its derivations in my early childhood socialization. My parents and grandparents, all of whom played an important role in my development, were all very principled people with lofty anticipations for those around them. Moral standards and behavioural expectations were quite conservative, with roots still drawing, not so faintly, on the Victorian era. As a result of this influence, I particularly remember that inculcation of manners and other social proprieties, to which my entire extended family vigorously contributed. I have fond memories of, between the ages of four and six, having learned my "pleases, thank yous, excuse mes, and may Is." Not only did I know them but, better yet, I was able to employ them correctly in the appropriate social contexts.

During a particular family gathering at my grandparents' home, I was delighted to have an uncle praise me and express to the rest of the table guests "what good manners" I had. To complete the fulfillment of my five-year-old ego, everyone else at the table joined in the accolades. I vividly remember the warm feeling and sense of satisfaction at

having fully served my societal duty, but also of knowing that the rest of my kinfolk approved. I remain with the crystal-clear recollection of meeting my parents' gazes and sensing the approval and perhaps pride they were also feeling. It is with that incident that I first recall feeling it a worthy endeavour to serve the interests of society. There were many other instances where "hauling in an arm-load of wood for the kitchen stove" or doing some errand around the farm also convinced me that there was immense personal fulfillment in serving others. This, of course, tended to be a feeling more prevalent apart from those routine "chores" which I often perceived as less than fulfilling. Nevertheless, I generally tended to seek the approval of others by doing those things that were seen as a worthy service to my significant others.

As an educator, I believe one of the most fundamental components of ensuring success is a naturally inborn desire to serve others. I am thankful to be the recipient of this gift, for without it I could not be as effective an educator as I am. This drive within me manifests in my desire to provide the best education possible to our students. Each time I present the results of our educational accomplishments to the board and our community, I feel that sense of pride and fulfillment at having served well. For me, there is something deeply rewarding in the knowledge that I have helped to make a positive difference in the life of our students. I recall experiencing this same sense even more powerfully when I was a teacher with a classroom of my own. There also the accolades and communication of appreciation were more spontaneous and overt. It is much rarer as a superintendent to receive expressions of appreciation, but they do come.

Not long ago I was called by a parent who was not able to pay her children's school fees. After thoroughly discussing the problem with the woman, I invited her for a

meeting at my office. She came and presented a woeful story of misfortune, abandonment, and lack of means. The board's policy position was that every parent must pay the fee or make some arrangement that portrayed a sincere and honest commitment, within their means, towards at least a partial payment. Given that many people resist the payment of school fees on purely philosophical grounds, it is always necessary to validate, as much as possible, the person's claim of incapacity to pay. A review of this case revealed true legitimacy. I was overcome with compassion for the woman and immediately set about helping her find a solution to the problem and arranging for her children's education to be uninterrupted. Together, we arrived at a mutually acceptable solution, one that maintained the dignity of this family and met the policy expectations of the board.

This parent returned to meet with me after the fact, expressing her sincere thanks and appreciation for my sensitive and caring interventions on her behalf. I graciously accepted her accolades and expressed my position that "my job is to see to it that all students have an opportunity to gain an education and achieve their full potential." I felt wonderfully fulfilled at having been part of such a wholesome and honourable resolution. Along with this case, I value my recollections of other parents and staff who either telephoned or visited me to express appreciation for some service I have helped to provide. I keep the cards of thanks and appreciation and display them in my office, as mementos of the gratitude expressed to me. These also serve as visible reminders of my personal mission: to serve and care for the children and youth of our community.

Fairness and justice. As I search my earliest memories, I find that an advocacy for fairness and justice has always been a part of me. I am sure that its genesis must, at

least in large part, lie in family socialization. My first remembrances of it relate to selfish concerns that the portions of dessert or other "treats" be equal in their allocations. I recall many admonitions from my mother in response to my plaintive, righteous indignations that "he got more than me." As I grew, so did my sense of justice, and a common retort in play was, "That's not fair." As I began school, this sense of fairness and justice seemed to become keener. Where other children seemed to be more accepting of what I perceived to be injustices, I was generally piqued by them, regularly voicing my concern to whomever would listen.

An example of unfairness that is burned into my memory comes from a Grade two experience. Our class was taught by Miss Rostopovich, a very strict and "no-nonsense" young woman. Although I remember her as caring about our progress; moving about to help with our seatwork; providing interesting, challenging activities, and occasionally even expressing what I perceived as loving warmth, she was in fact a raging disciplinarian. I recall her bringing two Grade eight boys into our classroom and strapping them until they leaped and danced in tearful retribution. Their offense, we were told, had been one of "calling her names" from their hilltop hideout along the street from her home to school. Although I was too frightened to pass judgment at the time, I knew the street and the hilltop, for not long before Miss Rostopovich had kindly taken me to her home and given me lunch. It was a day when I had rushed away from home and onto the bus without my *Roy Rogers* lunch box. She had been kind and loving to me that day, and I thought it was wrong for these "big kids" to have called her names.

Regardless of my rationalizations in her defense, I was soon to feel the punitive wrath of Miss Rostopovich. In her zeal to ensure that we faithfully did our assignments

and studied our lessons, one day she threatened that anyone with more than three wrong in an upcoming spelling quiz would receive the strap. I definitely recall this warning as increasing my anxiety level several fold, and as fate would have it, a normally very capable little speller ended up with four wrong on the test. My anxiety level now skyrocketed as Miss Rostopovich directed us to raise our hands and indicate who had more than three wrong. Raising my trembling hand, I surveyed the room and took some consolation in seeing all but two students with hands raised. Surely she would not strap the whole works of us, I thought, but I was wrong. Excepting the two girls who did not raise their hands, she lined the whole class single file at the front of the room and proceeded to strap each of us--one stroke on an outstretched hand. Being well down the line, I had more time to contemplate this painful ignominy and, with my higher anxiety and sensitivity level, was the only one to begin crying. This garnered not only a sharp rebuke from Miss Rostopovich, but also a derisive sneer from a girl classmate: "Oh stop bawling!" The scornful remark was one thing in my moment of anguish, but from a *girl*--it was the "mother of all humiliations."

I took my strapping along with the rest of the group, and as I regained my composure, I felt there was something wrong with what had just happened. Nevertheless, I was accepting that I had somehow deserved this punishment, and it certainly was far less than the Grade eight boys had received earlier that year. Then my waxing rationalization came crashing down with a reverberation that still resounds throughout my being. Miss Rostopovich queried the two girls who had remained seated as to their scores. In their reticence to respond she checked their papers and angrily announced that they also had failed to achieve the desired standard. I was about to feel sorry for them,

for not only had they failed to meet the teacher's standard, but they had also lied about it, thus circumventing their due castigation. But to my absolute astonishment, Miss Rostopovich gave them only a stern lecture and promptly returned to her instructional activities. My understanding of unfairness and injustice was made complete in that short moment, and along with that comprehension came a fervently unceasing drive to fight for fairness and justice.

Part of my battle for fairness and justice is also fired by an aversion to marginalization. Although we often immediately make the assumption that it is only people of minorities, low socio-economic status, or feminine gender that are marginalized, this is not necessarily so. As I reflect on my own childhood experience, growing up in a borderline agricultural area, still very much permeated with the "boom town" mentality of the recently departed lumbering industry, it was also the educated, civil, and rational people who were often marginalized. Those who were not willing to "get down in the mud, blood, beer, treachery, and gossip" were left at the fringes of community acceptance. It seemed that the loudest, most aggressive, toughest, and ribald --those on the very edge of what we would today call *decorum*--were the admired, looked up to, and followed. I saw some fine people suffer indignities in this setting and have since vowed that I will do all in my power to avoid the marginalization of *anyone.* I am every day thankful that I, as a professional educator, in an esteemed, high-status position, now have the power to effect justice, harmony, and goodwill in my sphere of influence.

In my work as a senior educational administrator, I am constantly surrounded by these "fairness" issues and regularly called upon to make rulings on them. One such situation involved the serious misbehaviour of a high school student who was

recommended for expulsion. A hearing was convened, and the evidence demonstrated this student as having exhibited tendencies threatening to the physical and educational welfare of his classmates. The school staff had been patient and acted appropriately, exhausting all avenues of counselling and censure, to no avail. The parents wholeheartedly blamed the school staff and other students for provoking the boy and then overreacting at his responses. Because the student was beyond the age requiring compulsory school attendance and unresponsive to all remediative attempts, it seemed, on the surface, straightforward and defensible to expel without alternative provisions.

However, as the expulsion hearing progressed, it became increasingly evident that this student was the product and victim of a seriously dysfunctional family socialization. When the student testified, with some semblance of sincerity, that he really wanted to complete his education, I could not find it in my heart to recommend a full and complete expulsion. It would not be fair to deprive this young person of the opportunity to complete his schooling in his home community. Hence, I recommended to the Board Committee that this student be removed from his current school indefinitely, but provided with an alternative to continue his education through an outreach program readily accessible to him. He would be allowed back into the school after exhibiting success in the outreach program. The committee accepted this ruling, but as is so often the case, this recommendation was viewed as too harsh by some observers and too soft by others. Nevertheless, I had peace in my soul that the ruling was fair and just in this case.

My inclination for fairness and justice permeates everything I do in my work. Another area where it plays heavily is in the allocation of resources to the schools. Here I carefully review and refine our efforts at making fair and equitable allotments. This is

an area where one is always in danger of capitulating to political pressures and the proverbial "squeaky wheel." However, I resist these pressures, often in the face of much opposition, and ensure fair and equitable disbursements of resources throughout the school division. I believe it is critical for all educators to guarantee the prevalence of fairness and justice within their domain of influence--our students are worth it.

Succeeding and excelling. I think I must have been born with a competitive nature. The earliest memories recorded in my cerebrum include the exhilaration and thrill of a competitive situation. In a period somewhere between three and four years of age, my being was overflowing with love, peace, goodwill, and fellowship with my parents. In retrospect, I view this time as one in which I had a general sense of happy well-being and integrated wholeness, which spoke to a harmonious and natural fit with my then small world. I had my father and mother all to myself because no siblings had yet arrived. I was at peace with my environment, but the "joy of the chase" lived within me nonetheless. If it was running faster than the butterfly, negotiating the farmyard without encountering the "mean old hen" or aggressive rooster, or occasionally competing wills with my parents, I aspired to it. It was thrilling, exciting, and my soul soared as the adrenaline rush of competition filled me.

I remember a sunny and warm summer day when I was out in the green-grassed farmyard with my father. I cannot recall what task he was doing, but my antics and involvement were apparently not meeting his expectations. A number of times he cautioned me to cease my behaviour, the nature of which is now lost to memory, but what I do remember is feeling an impish delight at competing wills with Dad. I persisted. He finally lost his patience, dropped his task, and proceeded vigorously in my direction.

I can still taste the thrill and excitement as I determined to escape his clutches. I "turned tail" and ran, with wings on my heels, destination the small alleyway between the smoke house and the garage. I had cleverly calculated that the alleyway was inaccessible to Dad because of his size. I felt as though I was in flight, my feet barely touching the grassy surface of the yard as I raced to my hideaway. However, the ending of this experience in exercising my competitive spirit taught that common sense and realism are usually the better part of valour. Somewhat prior to reaching my intended recluse, I was apprehended and treated to a smart "smack" on the backside and a stern lecture about disobedience. Even through my tears of hurt feelings, I still cherished the thought that I might have beaten him to the alley, "and he wouldn't have been able to get me in there!" --again an impish moment.

As I grew older, my parents and extended family emphasized the value and honour of achievement. "Whatever you do is worth doing well," was a familiar aphorism to me. I rallied to their exhortation and became an achiever, albeit sometimes stalling before an endeavour at the recognition of how hard it was going to be to do really well. Although some praise was usually forthcoming from my parents when I did achieve, they were not exceedingly vocal with it. They felt that one should not be too proud of oneself, for it might lead to boastfulness and vanity, truly undesirable characteristics. I believe this parental response left me with a striving nature, always trying to do better and be worthy of more liberal reinforcement and praise. As a result, I now take great care to provide an appropriate amount of praise to those around me. My achievement drive manifested itself progressively more and more as my competencies and confidence increased with age. I developed a dogged determination and perseverance to achieve

success at whatever goal was before me. Today I still aspire to have the most effective educational operation possible, and never seem to be satisfied that I have it. However, the wisdom and experience of life and a striving nature have also schooled me in how to moderate my perfectionism, turning it into a strength. In the end, I believe my students, staff, and community benefit from my efforts as I constantly strive to improve the opportunities for students, the working conditions of employees, and the overall quality of the school system.

Playfulness and humour. I have a "twinkling in my eye" and love the lighter side of life, but I am not sure when or how it developed in my being. I feel it must be very much a hereditary feature, for my early reminiscings bring to mind family gatherings and activities filled with humour and amusement. My maternal grandfather has been gone for over 40 years, but one of the clearest memories I have of him is his full and hearty laughter. It seems we were much a family of tricksters, with many funny stories and practical jokes. Being raised in the midst of such jocularity no doubt augmented an already light-hearted nature.

One of our favorite meal-time entertainments was the "vanishing dessert" phenomenon. My first reminiscence of this is from the age of five or six when an uncle really caught me off guard. Seated around my grandparents' table, we were busily eating our dessert, a vital part of any meal in my childlike estimation. All at once my uncle rose unexpectedly from his place and looked seriously and intently out the window above the table. If this sudden act did not capture our attention, then the next one certainly did. He vigorously exclaimed, "Well would you look at that! Those [invective deletive] horses, they're up on their hind legs trying to climb on the threshing machine!!" As though

controlled by the same mechanical action, we rose as one, simultaneously, seven or eight people, young and old, focussing our collective gaze through the window on the field beyond. But in vain did we scan for the unusual occurrence we had been prompted to anticipate. The threshing machine was there, and some distance from it were three horses quietly grazing. It was a peaceful and bucolic landscape. As we descended back to our seats, numerous questioning looks were cast upon this uncle, who was now busily engaged with his dessert. He radiated a complete air of innocence, the emulation of a saint for sure.

The smirks of the adults at the table told me "something was up," but I was unaware as to what. I returned to the meal to find my dessert gone, but as I contemplated the situation, I wasn't sure whether I'd finished it or not. There was no empty dish, but Gramma was regularly efficient at moving empty dishes out of the way. Not wanting to appear unpoised, I cast some furtive glances around the table and saw neither my dish nor an empty one on the adjacent counter. I also noted that everyone was a bit too quiet and seemingly overoccupied with their desserts. A surreptitious air pervaded the place.

With a warm flush rising into my face, I realized that I might have "been had." Nevertheless, still not wanting to appear unpoised, I appealed to those I felt I could most count on. "Mom----Gramma," I queried as my eyes searched their faces, "Is my dessert all gone?" At that point the table erupted into gales of laughter and a jovial uncle produced, from under the table, my half-finished dessert. I was not sure how I felt initially, but quickly found the humour and joined the amusement, albeit my giggling was at least lightly laced with embarrassment.

I vowed that I would even the score with this uncle, and did many times, as our family continued to enjoy the bonding and entertaining quality of humour over the years. I arrive at the present taking delight in the healthy and regenerative medicine that playfulness, laughter, and amusement can provide in all situations. As an educator, I've livened up my teaching with humour, and used it in my constant interactions with people. It builds bonds, provides spice and flavour to life, and, most of all, gets us through some of the difficult times. A big smile and a hearty laugh drive the demons of darkness away.

Although, for me, I most enjoy finding and raising to light the spontaneous humour that exists in common situations, I also often prepare something special to assist the process. I did exactly that at a recent annual board-administrator system-planning retreat. These retreats are fairly momentous occasions where the governing body of the school division comes together for a full weekend to plan operational goals and strategies for the next year. It involves all school trustees, all principals, and all central administrators. As superintendent, I had the responsibility of chairing and controlling the interaction among 40 members of this august group. Needless to say, there was a proliferation of opinions and viewpoints, making fertile ground for vociferous debate and argument. I knew that my credibility would be enhanced or diminished by the manner in which I conducted the discussions. Given that we were recently "regionalized" and at least one half of the participants did not know me well, the establishment of my credibility was exigent. Accordingly, I called upon two old friends--namely, "playfulness and humour"--to contribute to the process.

In concert with an administrator colleague, I had some "discussion aids" prepared. Each was a 10 centimeter-diameter, half-moon shaped, semicircular piece of

paper with an incision traced parallel to the curved edge, creating a hanger or stirrup from which to suspend it. The hanger was to be hooked over the top of one's ear, with the main part of the semicircle covering the aural orifice. Emblazoned across the external side of the semicircle for full public view was the bold script, "bullshit deflector." As part of the opening ceremonies and after a few humorous anecdotes, I distributed the deflectors, explaining to the group that they were for their comfort and safety during the dialectical flight to come. This opening was met with satisfaction, acceptance, and a good deal of mirth. The stage was set for me to use this device safely during our proceedings.

On the second day of the retreat, during one particularly polemical exchange, my chairing skills were being tested as a large number of people wanted to speak, all more or less at once. I was jotting down the order of their respective signals to ensure that each would eventually be given the floor in their turn. Finally, one senior and respected trustee, who had previously spent many years as chairman, took the floor, cutting off another speaker. Exercising excellent parliamentarianism, I cautioned him and suggested that he was out of order. He retorted rather stridently that I had consistently failed to see his raised hand because I paid more attention to the right half of the room at the expense of the left. He continued, suggesting that I needed to pay more attention to his half.

Feeling that I had a fairly strong relationship with him, I instantly weighed the risk and then headlong, with great drama, placed my deflector over my left ear while he was still pontificating. My action was immediately noted by everyone in the room, including the trustee who had been challenging me. The "house came down" in uproarious laughter, and, to my solace, I noted the trustee joining in with alacrity and a

"twinkling in his eye." As soon as the din subsided, I quickly mollified any possible displeasure he might have had with me by apologizing and assuring that I would be more careful in scanning to my left. This I did with a big smile and my most sanguine air. He smiled and gestured to me as though to say, "Oh be off with you, you rascal!" The mood of the whole assembly was refreshingly lifted, and our meeting proceeded successfully. Again I had used humour, revelry, whimsy--the outrageous--to be a better leader.

The Grand Conjunction

After exploring these narrative threads of influence, the question remains as to how they came together, forming me into an educator. To gain a more complete understanding of such a phenomenon, it is often useful to examine it through the lens of more than one metaphor. Hence, if one lets the imagination roam, it is easy to see each of the aforementioned narrative threads being rolled and gathered into a ball of yarn--a narrative attribute. If one then takes leave of the textile metaphor entirely, it is not difficult to picture each of those narrative attribute spheres gradually transformed into planetary orbs circling within a solar system.

Moving to this celestial metaphor, it is said that the planets of our solar system were formed out of the primal brew of the "big bang," each one an amalgam of matter drawn together by abstruse forces within the universe. In like manner, each of these aforementioned narrative attributes of my person coalesced out of the primal essence of my heredity and experience, being formed into the "planets" of shaping forces. It is also said that on rare occasions down through the ages, the planets of our solar system line up in a "grand conjunction," thereby exerting exceptional gravitational forces that seriously influence earthly affairs. Also in like manner, my narrative attributes were aligned into a

"grand conjunction," loosing empyrean forces that formed and shaped me into the educator I am and the one I will be. In my mind, the mysterious force responsible for the unique amalgamation and conjunction of these shaping forces is the hand of God. Hence, my call to become an educator is really the call of the Creator. It is a call to my rightful place in the universe, a call that I have responded to and captured in this memoir.

The Memoir

As Liebowitz (1989) ventured, this memoir provided me with the means to offer my readers "privileged glimpses of the past, flares in the metaphysical darkness" (p. xvi). In crafting it, I had to become the editor of my own life, as Zinsser (1987, p. 24) described, cutting and pruning an unwieldy story and giving it a narrative shape; or as Morrison (1987) described, where I journeyed through memory to various sites in "a kind of literary archeology . . . to see what remains were left behind and to reconstruct the worlds that these remains imply" (p. 112). It was a process where I had to follow McKiel's (1995, p. 9) advice, listening to the child who I was, who formulated what I became, who still lives within, and who is now a part of what I am. To my joy and gratification, I found that the child is in fact still there and loves to come out to play. Further, when I ask him to come out and play, he not only remains part of what I am, but more important, he becomes part of what I will evolve into. It was indeed a stirring experience, one that has left me richer in deep reflection and self-understanding.

CHAPTER VI

The Field Texts Tell a Story

I used to know an old man who could walk
by any cornfield and hear the corn singing.
--Baylor and Parnall, *The Other Way To Listen*

Of Listening

The field texts came bearing a story, but in their raw form they were foreigners unto this landscape, unable to tell and be understood. Being latently rich in storied concepts, categories, patterns, and themes, they called out to have their story told. However, they needed an interpreter, someone who would study them, listening carefully, hearing their stories, and restorying them in the language of the reader. As Edel (1984) said, "Uninterpreted truth is as useless as buried gold" (p. 183). Hence, as researcher, I came to liberate that story, digging up the treasure. To do this task well, like Baylor and Parnall's (1978) child, I had to employ "*The Other Way To Listen*" and be able to hear things such as

> the corn singing, . . . wildflower seeds burst open, beginning to grow underground, . . . a rock murmur kind of good things to a lizard, . . . a whole sky full of stars, . . . a cactus blooming in the dark, . . . wind and quail and coyotes and doves, . . . the hills singing, . . . [and] dark shiny lava rocks humming. (pp. 1-27)

In answering the call to tell the field texts' story, I first had to be still, for as the scriptures tell, "He who answers before listening, that is his folly and his shame" (Prov. 18:13, New International Version). To faithfully reproduce their story, I listened with my heart and my soul, hearing through the spiritual connectedness that links all creation. It is a connectedness that links me and my story with the participants, their stories, the field

texts through which I captured those stories, and the ultimate purposes and outcomes of this research. Finally, this connectedness joins my story with those of the participants in a fusion of narrative unity, a new tale told by these offerings of the field.

The themes. By studying the field texts and listening, as described above, I was able to analyze them and discover the basic "meaning units" or concepts contained within. These concepts were then carefully examined to determine the patterns of "like mindedness" among them, which in turn allowed them to be grouped into "like-minded" categories. Like the concepts, these categories were also analyzed to determine patterns of "like mindedness" among them. They were then grouped into "like-minded" themes, the principal treasures of our quest. For the participants and me collectively, these treasures are the descriptions of those influences that shaped us to become educators. And I marvelled as, in Zinsser's (1987) words, "what struck me about the . . . accounts was how many themes they had in common" (p. 12). This chapter is the viewing gallery into which these vignettes were presented, an important contribution to the overall research narrative.

As we reflected, remembered, and told of those influences in our lives that we believed instrumental in shaping us to become educators, we were more definite about some than others. First, there were those influences about which we felt strongly and clearly identified as key guides along our path to becoming. Second, there were those aspects of our beings that we described, generally holding that they related to our educational path, but not explicitly stating them as such. Elements of this latter group were often identified as being supportive to good educator practice. Those themes describing the forces that were clearly identified as main influencers are assembled under

the rubric of *primary influencers*. Secondly, those which were generally held as relative to vocational choice and practice are called *secondary influencers*. A third, associated theme emerged, speaking to the *self-reflection and introspection* that has come with life, increasing age and wisdom, and involvement in this study.

Of Primary Influencers

The primary influencers consisted of two things: (a) the effect other persons had on our path to becoming educators, and (b) our particular personality attributes that we deemed as shaping for that destiny. The effect of other persons included the consequence of positive experiences with special teachers, negative experiences with teachers, love for a particular subject area, impact of parents and extended family, marginalization, and spirituality. The personality attributes were a serving and helping nature, the drive to understand and care for others, a joy in seeing others develop, and a belief in the importance of teaching.

The special teacher. All of the participants, myself included, were influenced to want to become educators because of our experiences with one or more outstanding teachers who had a profound impact on our lives. This is undoubtedly the strongest and most definite influencing factor for the group as a whole:

> My decision was based on . . . one special high school teacher, . . . and of course, if it wasn't for . . . [him], I may not have made my decision at the time of graduation. . . . I wanted to emulate all that he had done for me and many other students. . . . [He] is the kind of teacher that I want to become. (Daelin narrative, pp. 1-2)

> I chose to be an educator, believe it or not, when I was in Grade Six and I had my first Grade Six teacher. . . . It was at that point that my parents couldn't figure out why . . . all of a sudden I was the first one to leave in the morning and the last one to come home in the late evening. It was just an incredible change; it was a transformation, . . . and from that point . . .

> all I could think of was being a teacher. For some reason they were having fun up there. (Jancek transcript, pp. 1-2)

> I particularly valued and appreciated those teachers who were my athletic coaches, and was influenced by them. When I observed the dedication, skill, and sincerity with which they endeavoured to help us succeed and achieve excellence, I gradually evolved a desire to emulate them. Although I had never before thought of education as a career, by Grade Twelve I found myself thinking, "I'd like to come back and give kids this opportunity." (Hal memoir, p. 52)

A related aspect of the "special teacher" theme was the influence these people have had on our practice. It was one thing that certain outstanding teachers were instrumental in our making the decision to become educators, but it is another thing how our behaviour as educators has been affected by them:

> I really hit it off with this teacher. I was always there. And now I'm teaching . . . the way he taught. . . . That's what I'm trying to do with these kids, because those were experiences I remember vividly. These kids are going to remember these experiences vividly . . . because that's how I was taught. (Jancek transcript, pp. 20-21)

> So I think her interest in my life went far beyond me just being a student there. She really tried to get to know me, and I think that I try to do that with my students. (Maronja transcript, p. 22)

> I remember . . . spending time in his classroom, and I remember just the love he had for those kids and how patient--my dad has the most--you'd never say my dad is a patient person if you met him outside of school, but in the classroom with children he is the most patient individual. . . . He just loves these children who have these special needs. . . . Maybe some of that [my passion for the vulnerable] came from my experiences with my dad and seeing him embrace the differences of these little guys. (Katrynia transcript, pp. 12-13)

Another related aspect of the "special teacher" theme is the powerful impact the whole school experience has on children and their development. Daelin and Maronja

had recollections of having "played school" as a child, something that reminded us of this powerful modelling influence:

> When I played school . . . we would switch: "Oh, it's my turn to be the teacher." And we'd have a desk sometimes, . . . and we'd have the chalkboard, and basically tried to copy what our teachers did with us in class. (Daelin transcript, pp. 8-9)

> I used to make . . . [little brother] and all my dolls sit there for hours and hours. We had this little blackboard on our wall, and I would teach him how to do math and how to read and how to write things, and he was pretty patient with me. And mom and dad . . . told me that I was really strict during that time. I would make him sit there, and he couldn't move. (Maronja transcript, p. 10)

The negative teacher experience. All of us except Jancek reported unpleasant memories of events and situations involving teachers we had when we were children or youths. These unpleasantries, viewed as wrongs in our eyes, tended to influence our practice once we had become teachers, causing us to vow to come back and do a better job. Additionally, for me personally, part of my inspiration to become a physical education teacher and coach was to correct the wrongs I had perceived.

> I found myself thinking, "I'd like to come back and give kids this opportunity." It was . . . [one] that I had been so often deprived of because of unwilling or incapable teacher sponsors. (Hal memoir, pp. 52-53)

> She gave me a spanking right away in front of everybody in the class. She just hit my bottom, . . . and I was terrified . . . because I never really got into trouble. . . . But it's just that I would never do that, and I wouldn't reprimand that student in the manner that she had done it with me. I would do it privately not to embarrass that student in front of the class. (Daelin transcript, p. 10)

> Quite honestly, I can say that very few of my elementary teachers inspired me to want to teach; in fact, if anything, later in life when the realization of my dream to be a teacher was coming to fruition, I reflect back on my elementary experience and felt these are the things I do *not* want to do to children. (Katrynia transcript, p. 2)

For Maronja and me, there were unpleasant memories, specifically of unfairness and injustice at the hands of teachers:

> I remember so many times being taken to the office and questioned about and almost blamed for it: "If it wasn't you, then you have to know who it was." . . . And I have a real problem with that; I just think it's really unfair to accuse people before you really know. (Maronja transcript, p. 18)

> I was about to feel sorry for them, for not only had they failed to meet the teacher's standard, they had lied about it, thus circumventing their due castigation. But to my absolute astonishment . . . [the teacher] only gave them a stern lecture and promptly returned to her instructional activities. My understanding of unfairness and injustice was made complete in that short moment, and along with that comprehension came a fervently unceasing drive to fight for fairness and justice. (Hal memoir, pp. 71-72)

Pssoh, Maronja, and Katrynia had recollections of the academic expectations and negative behavioural responses some teachers demonstrated respecting student achievement:

> When I was a kid in school, a teacher once told my mom, ". . . [Pssoh] is a nice guy, but not university material." This was hurtful. (Pssoh transcript, p. 27)

> I just remember how humiliating she [the teacher] was to the students that got the lower marks. . . . And I just remember the kinds of comments that she used to make to the kids. . . . Being a teacher, I now know how . . . damaging that can be to some kids. And . . . I've made a real conscious effort not to involve myself in that. (Maronja, transcript, pp. 20-23)

> My Grade One experience was probably the most traumatic, and I can't say that I ever remember that woman being a loving person at all that year. But the memory that I have that stands out for me, that was really destructive for me, was her passing out the science tests that we had and passing them out from highest to lowest, and my mark being the lowest. And I also did very well in school in elementary . . . and took a lot of pride in my accomplishments and that kind of thing. So this was quite devastating to me, and I remember going home just crying that day, just uncontrollably, because it had been such a humiliating experience. (Katrynia transcript, p. 4)

The parent influence. Naturally, parent influence was probably the single most powerful effect on every aspect of our lives. All of the participants were significantly influenced in some way by their parents. First and foremost was the provision of security: a safe, caring, and loving environment, something that was fondly remembered by each of us. These experiences were "sacred times," providing us with a solid grounding in life and a base from which to become educators:

> I remember those as being sacred times, . . . just that whole experience of going somewhere as a family and doing something together. . . . So when I think back to my family, I think of very close times; I think of really closely shared experience. Even though we weren't a supper-table family, we were, and still are, a very close-knit family. I remember ferryboat rides and all that goes with the ocean. I remember walking on beaches together, holding hands. (Katrynia transcript, pp. 21-22)

> You are aware of who you are as an individual and you feel confident about it. . . . Being a teenager and going to school with non-Native kids, it was important that I was a . . . [family name] because I knew my family had a good reputation, and they were already very successful. My dad was a businessman, and my mother was a teacher, and for me, those were important things. (Pssoh transcript, p. 15)

> I had the undivided love and attention of Mom and Dad. This left me feeling warm, secure, happy, and at peace with my small world. I was in my glory, harmoniously integrated into the universe, consciously whole, and full of the joy of life. I believe the legacy of this period is a solid grounding, a firm foundation serving as a base from which I could engage the world. (Hal memoir, p. 47)

We all felt our parents had high standards and expectations for us, something that channelled and motivated us in our school studies, behavioural standards, and pursuit of a meaningful and self-suiting vocation. For each of us, it is as Jancek said: "I learned a lot of very valuable values . . . that I grew up with" (Jancek transcript, p. 6).

> It was a home where high standards, lofty expectations, and propriety were exalted and emphasized. . . . It was a home where my parents modelled these virtues and demanded compliance with their spirit. While I was often in rebellious disagreement, I am now thankful for their

> provision of that gift. It was a gift that lay within me, ripening and fermenting during my formative years, gradually and finally emerging as the fine aged wine of maturity. It is a vintage that has served me well as I minister unto humankind. (Hal memoir, p. 45)

> My mom and dad, I think, are a wonderful mix of people. My dad is the one that sort of says, "You can always do better," and he always expected *very* high standards from us kids. My mom was sort of the one that hugged us when things were tough and said. "It'll be okay, and you're the best person on the earth" type thing. (Maronja transcript, p. 7)

> When I graduated from high school, I was really considering taking a year off, but I knew that my parents didn't want me to do that. . . . You don't take a year off school; you go straight to university. So I never questioned them, and I never tried to debate with them about it, because I know that's an expectation of me. (Daelin transcript, pp. 29-30)

Within the framework of high standards and expectations, there was an educational emphasis in our homes. Our parents believed in the value of education and supported our learning activities in and out of school in many ways. This support provided another stone in the foundation of our career-building endeavour.

> They [parents] really believed in education, and not just formal education that you receive in a school, but they sort of saw the world as a place to learn from, and I think they really tried to teach that to us kids, that there's all kinds of learning opportunities, and you have to make yourself available to them because it's really important. (Maronja transcript, p. 15)

> I think about what really called me to be a teacher . . . had a great deal to do with growing up in a family of educators. I think that had a profound influence on me in so many ways. . . . I always wanted to be a teacher. I can't imagine where that would have come from except from the fact that both my parents were teachers. (Katrynia transcript, p. 1)

> Because of my own family background, my mom and dad were both very influential in education, so it was already something that was a topic at home and something that I heard them talking about around the kitchen table. (Pssoh transcript, p. 2)

And, in the case of Jancek's experience, this parental emphasis on educational achievement was also fraught with tragedy, pain, and terrible disappointment:

> The day I go to sign up [for business school] and I come home, there's just a big hoopla, and Dad's just excited because one of his first boys are going to . . . [business school]. . . . My dad had a massive heart attack and died within two hours, at the knees of my brother and me, who tried to give him CPR. And the next day I'm going . . . to start a career for my father. It's not really my career; it's his choice. But I'm a traditionalist, . . . so . . . I'm still thinking, . . . I can't miss school. . . . And it was a hellish year. (Jancek transcript, p. 7)

Along with the family standards and educational emphasis, there was also parent influence in the actual choice of vocation. Although Maronja and Pssoh were silent on this issue, for Daelin, Katrynia and me, our parents gave us the freedom to choose a vocational direction and supported us in that endeavour. Katrynia did receive urgings from the external community that she emulate her mother as a successful teacher; and in Jancek's case, there was pressure to adopt a certain career path:

> My parents never really pressured me into a certain career. They always told me to do whatever makes me happy. (Daelin narrative, p. 2)

> What I do remember, . . . going through my practicum . . . and realizing that, not from my mom, but that there was an expectation from *others*, that I was going to be like my mom. . . . I felt like in my first year, and even in my practicum, that I had to be "super teacher." I really felt that, so that was hard, hard on me, very hard. (Katrynia transcript, pp. 24-25)

> As soon as I finished high school, I was going to . . . [business school]. I wanted to go to university, but my dad said, "No, you're going to learn the administrative side of the business so you can . . . [become part of a family partnership]." . . . So actually, for Grade Eleven and Twelve I wasn't really looking at the teaching aspect as much as I was looking at what my dad had planned for us. (Jancek transcript, p. 5)

Although all of the participants demonstrated the quality of being industrious, Jancek, Maronja, Daelin, and I mentioned how our parents fostered within us, an understanding of the value and necessity of hard work, an important quality for an educator:

> I worked so hard that summer . . . because my dad didn't pay for my education either. . . . But room and board was always paid for by Dad and Mom . . . as long as you were going to school. I learned a lot of very valuable values, I guess. (Jancek transcript, p. 6)

> All of our lives we worked hard on the farm to make it a prosperous place, so I think that made a big difference, being able to work alongside my mom and dad, just seeing the quality of their work. And both my parents are really hard-working people and have a lot of pride in the things that they do, and that's really important to them. (Maronja transcript, p. 7)

> It was a home where . . . hard work . . .[was] valued and viewed as the means to a better and easier life. It was a home where my parents modelled these virtues and demanded compliance with their spirit. (Hal memoir, p. 45)

Daelin, Jancek, and I referred to aspects of our socialization where our parents' behaviour was not entirely to our liking. This left each of us with certain aspirations about how we might do things differently, something we do in our work as educators or in our families:

> My parents were . . . noncommunicative, nonverbal. They don't say , "I love you"; they show you that they love you in a different way . . . by giving you food , giving you shelter, and . . . supporting you financially in what you want to do. . . . So they weren't really verbally encouraging. (Daelin transcript, p. 18)

> And although I was a happy kid, I was always very much enrolled in the community life, and what happened was, my father's friends always took me to the games with their children, and I didn't like that, because my father wasn't there to see me grow, see me score that big goal at the end of the game. . . . I thought, if I ever get married, I'm going to make sure I'm always there for my kids. (Jancek transcript, p. 2)

> Although some praise was usually forthcoming from my parents when I did achieve, they were not exceedingly vocal with it. They felt that one should not be too proud of oneself, for it might lead to boastfulness and vanity, truly undesirable characteristics. I believe this parental response left me with a striving nature, always trying to do better and be worthy of more liberal reinforcement and praise. Resultingly, I now take great care to provide an appropriate amount of praise to those around me. (Hal memoir, p. 75)

Also, Pssoh felt his skills and attributes as an educational leader were positively shaped by the traditional elders of his aboriginal community--parents in another sense:

> It was quite an advantage for me. . . . They were the old traditional kind; . . . they still really believed the old way of doing business, and it was interesting for me to watch them and say, "Okay, so this is how you do business," and . . . that's how I learned how to run a meeting and how to act and deal with community and how to deal with Indian Affairs and that kind of thing. So I was really very fortunate. (Pssoh transcript, p. 6)

The marginalization experience. All of the participants, myself included, have had experience with some degree of being personally marginalized, something that has had an influence on our paths to becoming educators. Although this has taken different forms with each of us, it has been an experience that has profoundly shaped us as educators, especially in our practice:

> Why is it as a teacher, I'm so drawn to marginalized children in my classroom? . . . Why is it too that all of the adults right now in my life who are mentors and who are also educators, they also are people who have that soft spot for the vulnerable? . . . So I started to think maybe it had something to do with the fact that even as a child growing up, I was overweight as a little girl, and I was called Fatso and all of that kind of thing. (Katrynia transcript, p. 12)

> I was a Catholic kid in a Protestant community. . . . We played soccer, and if we kicked the ball over the fence, they kept it. They were bigger than us; there were more of them. If they kicked the ball over, if we didn't kick it back fast enough, some of them came over and beat us up. . . . I never liked it. . . . When I went to try out for the hockey teams . . . there was tension on the ice. . . . They were all much better in their eyes, [and] they got more ice time. There just never was that fairness. (Jancek transcript, pp. 31-32)

> I was one of the first kids . . . [from the reserve] to integrate, so we were the first group of kids to actually go into the White schools, and it was very difficult to fit in right away. . . . I really made an effort to fit in. I went the extra mile, and sometimes it meant turning the other cheek or looking the other way or saying , "Okay, I'll just have to put up with it." And I think you are only able to do that if you have a really strong sense of who you are, if you are aware of who you are as an individual and you feel

> confident about it or you feel good about it. For me, it wasn't till later that I really worried about racism. (Pssoh transcript, pp. 14-15)

> When I was in Grade One, I did not want to be Chinese. . . . But in multicultural education . . . you have to consider those visible minorities and let those student bring in their own cultures. And I think, as a minority in the teaching profession, I can identify with them, and I know what it feels like to not be able to celebrate your culture in the classroom. And I just think that's something that I could bring to the profession because I am a minority. I think that's where I would feel most rewarded. (Daelin transcript, pp. 26-34)

The spiritual influence. All of the participants, including myself, expressed a sense that we had been influenced spiritually by a belief in God and an adherence to Godly principles. Naturally, this spiritual influence also affected us in our career choice, but even more so in our practice as educators:

> I used to go to church. . . . I always went to Bible camp . . . and then became active in the youth group. I just loved that. . . . I do believe in God. . . . I think going to church as a child helped me form all the values that I have now, and I think that's why I turned out to be . . . good. (Daelin transcript, pp. 35-36).

> I grew up in the . . . [denomination], and we went to church always as a child, and I still go to church now. . . . I brought the Bible teaching over into my teaching, . . . faith, trust , hope, and perseverance. (Maronja transcript, p. 41)

> As a family we were churchgoers. . . . I do see myself as a spiritual person in the sense that there's a spirit that guides me, and I do, obviously, believe in God, and I pray. And I'm so thankful all of the time for the things that I have in my life, and I seek guidance in prayer. So there's a sense of being alone with that spirituality that's been important in my life. . . . So its certainly important in my practice because it keeps me healthy. (Katrynia transcript, p. 32)

Jancek, Pssoh, and I saw our career paths as a series of doors opening and closing serendipitously, as if by the spiritual hand of God:

> We didn't really know this was going to put me through university two years down the road, but divine . . . There's a reason for everything. Why do we do things two years ahead of time? . . . God always has a reason for

> why you fail at some things, because you're going to excel at something else. There's always a reason. (Jancek transcript, p. 35)

> So I know from a kid I had heard that in my head, and I didn't realize that eventually I'd be involved in it. . . . So in that way it seems like it was something I was going to do from when I was young. But in another way it was something I didn't plan. In another way it was almost something I fell into as well, and the more stuff I did, the more I ended up dealing with education. . . . And then almost by fluke, I ended up in education. (Pssoh transcript, pp. 2-3)

> In my mind, the mysterious force responsible for the unique amalgamation and conjunction of these shaping forces is the hand of God. Hence, my call to become an educator is really the call of the Creator. It is a call to my rightful place in the universe. (Hal memoir, p. 81)

The serving and helping trait. All of the participants, including myself, perceived ourselves as being driven by a strong desire to serve and help other people. We felt this trait was an instrumental guiding force in our destiny to become educators:

> I loved teaching the little kids how to skate. . . . I taught because I enjoy helping others. Throughout my years of schooling, I considered a number of career choices. . . . When I think about Gardner's seven intelligences, I realize that all of these professions relate to my interpersonal intelligence. Also, most of them are "helping" professions. (Daelin narrative, p. 1)

> A passion to serve [he has]. . . . And if they [students] can always see the light, then there's a passion for them to reach that light too, just like there's a passion for me to watch them reach that light and watch the growing. . . . I've seen my Grade Seven students reach their pinnacle here . . . For me that's a passion, . . . very rich. (Jancek transcript, p. 25)

> I think what I have is . . . a commitment to the community, because I grew up and still have a lot of good friends. I was treated well in the community and I fit in. . . . I've always felt the community was accepting, so in return, I felt loyalty to work here. I've been offered jobs in other places. . . . But I couldn't do it. (Pssoh transcript, p. 17)

For me personally, part of my sense of serving and helping was also preserving peace and harmony through diplomatic efforts:

> That particular event seemed to solidify, once and forever, my intense desire to promote peace and harmony among all people in my sphere of

> influence. The events of that day raised to the surface of my consciousness the realization that I could not comfortably coexist with conflict and the perpetration of violence upon another being. Today, as an educational leader, that translates to verbal, emotional, and social conflict or violence as well. I do everything in my power to maintain a peaceful and harmonious climate so that all energies can be focussed on helping our students. (Hal memoir, p. 60)

The understanding and caring trait. As a group, we shared a characteristic of desiring to understand and care for other people and their welfare. This trait is so deeply embedded within us that it has undoubtedly been key in carving out our vocational path, drawing us to work with and care for people. This characteristic also makes a deeply penetrating impression on our practice as educators:

> I decided to become an elementary teacher because I care about the future of all children. . . . When I think of how people describe me, they would say that I am caring, patient, organized, and responsible. . . . I am seen as a kind and caring person. (Daelin narrative, pp. 2-3)

> One of the teachers on staff said to me, "You know why you get along so well with all these bad kids in our school? . . . Because you can tell you used to be one of them, . . . and you still are, so that's the difference." I said, "I'll take that as a compliment and carry on with this life." And I think that's true, and I think that has given me a better understanding of kids. And I know what it feels like. (Maronja transcript, p. 12)

> When I see other people now, I can be empathetic to them. I can say, "Okay, I understand how you feel, I understand what you're going through because I know how that feels." (Pssoh transcript, p. 14)

The "joy in seeing others grow" trait. Daelin, Jancek, Katrynia, Pssoh, and I all expressed an attribute of feeling joy and deep personal reward in seeing other people grow, develop, and achieve their own happiness. We felt that this trait was one that inevitably prompted us to pursue an educational vocation:

> And if they [students] can always see the light, then there's a passion for them to reach that light too, just like there's a passion for me to watch them reach that light and watch the growing. . . . For me that's a passion.

> . . . There's always been a passion to see others grow. (Jancek transcript, pp. 25-26)

> I think a lot of it does come down to, why are you teaching? what draws you to this? because I can't believe if you aren't drawn to it . . . from a profound sense of wanting to make a difference in the life of a child, then I think that's when that stuff [harmful practice] happens, because I don't see how, if that was your mission or that was why you were called to teach, then how could you do those things? (Katrynia transcript, pp. 9-10)

> For me, there is something deeply rewarding in the knowledge that I have helped to make a positive difference in the life of our students. I recall experiencing this same sense even more powerfully when I was a teacher with a classroom of my own. There also, the accolades and communication of appreciation were more spontaneous and overt. It is much rarer as a superintendent to receive expressions of appreciation, but they do come. (Hal memoir, p. 68)

The "importance of teaching" belief. With all of us but Maronja speaking to this belief, it was generally felt that teaching is a very important service that must be provided to society. The importance of teaching "outweighed" the desirable attributes of other careers:

> I won't be making that much money on a teacher's salary. A teacher's salary is not why I chose to become an educator. . . . Ever since I decided to become a teacher, I started to realize how much influence my job will have on many children's lives. Doing a poor job does not only affect myself, but many others too. (Daelin narrative, pp. 3-4)

> And so as I was coming closer to being a teacher, even those experiences, as negative as they were, were incredibly shaping to me because I *knew*, I *knew* that you could have this incredible impact on people's lives, and that is just so amazing to me. I don't think there's another career like this out there, I really don't. (Katrynia transcript, pp. 2-3)

> The only thing that really matters is what happens in the classroom. (Pssoh transcript, p. 27)

The love of subject area. Along with Maronja and Jancek, I was strongly influenced to become an educator by my affection for a particular subject area or

discipline. Each of us enjoyed a particular discipline so much that we wanted to stay involved in it; hence, another contributing factor in our becoming:

> I think that's why I ended up being a . . . [particular subject area] teacher. I really like hands-on type of things. Kids can see their learning happening really quickly and . . . get up and move. It doesn't have to be a structured classroom. (Maronja transcript, p. 13)

> I have a little rocket club here, and science . . . is only science until you're right in it. . . . Now, that's what I'm trying to do with these kids, because those were experiences I remember vividly, . . .because I'm a real hands-on, and that's why I probably like this CTS. (Jancek transcript, pp. 20-22)

> The thought of being a physical education teacher somehow appealed to me. I could be involved both as an instructor, teaching the activities I loved so much, and as a coach, refining my athletic teams and individuals to perfection. (Hal memoir, p. 53)

Of Secondary Influencers

The secondary influencers are aspects of our lives that somehow relate to our holistic being as educators. They were not explicitly stated as primary causal factors in our paths to becoming educators, but shared as a past and present part of that educator person we have become. Because of the complicated entanglement of interrelation among factors composing our holistic natures, it is self-evident that these described factors played some role in our path to becoming educators. The secondary influencers are a collection of character traits and attitudes: approval seeking, social orientation, need for variety and challenge, flexibility and adaptability, anxiety and self-consciousness, competitiveness, perfectionism, analytical and self-evaluative, demanding of fairness and justice, persevering, leadership abilities, high moral standards and principles, trust and honesty, ability to forgive, and a sense of humour.

The social orientation trait. All of us were very social people who enjoyed being with others, interacting with them, and generally sharing of ourselves. We felt this was an important quality for teachers to have. For myself, this trait also manifested a strong drive to work towards ensuring peace and harmony among people. I found myself very diplomatic and sensitive to potential strife, proactively trying to preclude it:

> I just think that I was involved in so many different things, I just became a very social type of person. (Jancek transcript, p. 42)

> I think that I've always really enjoyed interactions with people. I like to meet new people; I like to have conversation. My family always tells me that I talk an awful lot. (Maronja transcript, p. 2)

> Mostly I think about them [personal qualities and attributes] in relationship to people. (Katrynia transcript, p. 15)

> I really enjoyed working with the teachers, and I enjoyed being with the kids too. . . . So it was nice being able to talk to them too, and I enjoyed doing that. (Pssoh transcript, p. 14)

The moral trait. All of us perceived ourselves as having high moral standards and principles for ourselves, in terms of morals, ethics, and personal values. We saw this as an important attribute for an educator:

> I think that going to church as a child and spending a lot of time with my aunt's family helped to shape my values I have today. Both taught me to care and to make morally appropriate decisions. (Daelin narrative, p. 2)

> I guess that my morals and values would once again steer me onto a new path, a new journey, a journey of lifelong learning and not a life of lifelong regretting. (Jancek narrative, p. 6)

> I have fairly high standards as a teacher and in my life in general. That was certainly the way I was raised. (Maronja transcript, p. 2)

> It was a home where my parents modelled these virtues and demanded compliance with their spirit. While I was often in rebellious disagreement, I am now thankful for their provision of that gift. It was a gift that lay within me, ripening and fermenting during my formative years, gradually and finally emerging as the fine aged wine of maturity. It

> is a vintage that has served me well as I minister unto humankind. (Hal memoir, pp. 45-46)

The fairness and justice trait. All of us had a strong desire to demand and promote fairness and justice. We were indignant about the occurrences of injustice and unfairness and worked very hard to ensure they were rectified. This was seen as a trait that is critical for an educator to have, one that tremendously influences our practice:

> I think fairness is on and off the field, in or out of the classroom. . . . As unfair as the system has been to many people, we can only make the system better by working well with others around us. I think that really rubs off on everybody. (Jancek transcript, p. 34)

> I think it's fine to have rules, but I think that every rule needs to have an exception too. And I think people's lives are important, and we have to take those into our jobs too, just like I expect . . . my students to understand who I am as a teacher and that I have good days, I have bad days. . . . And so I think, in order for me to gain that kind of understanding from them, I have to give them the same type of understanding. (Maronja transcript, p. 2)

> I remember she treated us fairly. I remember that she didn't pick on the boys. I remember that she didn't have her pets. So in a way . . . there was a quality about her that was significantly different from those first three years. . . . One thing I do not have and *never* have had, I don't believe, and I don't think any of my kids would ever say I've had it, is pets or favourites. (Katrynia transcript, pp. 10-12)

> I think what I learned from my dad was, the big thing . . . was to be fair, so I know that's important to me too. You have to be fair, and not just be fair, but be seen to be fair. That's important. (Pssoh transcript, p. 14)

The approval seeking trait. All of us except Katrynia expressed concern about gaining and maintaining the approval of other people as we carried out our various activities in life. This was usually parent approval that was valued; however, other people also tended to matter. This trait seemed to manifest within us as a striving nature, whereby we set out to please others:

> But I think that I've proven to my dad up above that I'm doing my job, because my kids want to spent time with me, even at work, even in a place of education. (Jancek transcript, p. 24)

> I think I will carry that striving . . . for the rest of my life too. I think that's positive and it's negative. I think that sometimes you can be really hard on yourself as a result of that. You sort of hate to admit failure with anything, and you always think, If I work harder, I'll do better. And sometimes as hard as you work at something, it's just not going to happen. . . . I expect a hundred percent; ninety-eight at least! (Maronja transcript, p.13)

> We needed people to believe us, that we were legitimate, that we're credible, that we're a real school, and parents needed to believe that. . . . And to me that's important to have legitimacy, and also to be seen like that by the outside. (Pssoh transcript p. 27)

Within this theme of desiring to please and seek the approval of other people in the provision of service, there was also the pleasure at being recognized and acknowledged positively for the service provided:

> I loved teaching the little kids how to skate and being recognized for my teaching ability. (Daelin narrative, p. 1)

> I keep the cards of thanks and appreciation and display them in my office, as mementos of the gratitude expressed to me. These also serve as visible reminders of my personal mission: to serve and care for the children and youth of our community. (Hal memoir, p. 69)

The persevering trait. Again, all of us except Katrynia described ourselves as being persevering and not giving up easily. This personality characteristic was viewed as being valuable in the practice of an educator:

> You can't just try it once and then give up; you have to keep on trying. (Daelin transcript, p. 13)

> I had personality and determination, and the strong will of a supportive wife, who had high expectations of me. . . . My self-confidence was high, my determination was unstoppable, and my personality was one of charisma. (Jancek narrative, pp. 4-5)

> I developed a dogged determination and perseverance to achieve success at whatever goal was before me. (Hal memoir, p. 76)

The "need for variety and challenge" trait. Daelin, Jancek, Katrynia, and Pssoh spoke of the challenge involved in being an educator, a vocation with significant variety and excitement. They craved this stimulation, probably something that helped channel them towards the profession:

> Yes, it was nice to walk into the room and have something new and different. . . . I really liked that, . . . just the change. It didn't make it boring; it wasn't always the same thing. (Daelin transcript, p. 11)

> You never get complacent. It's kind of like you always need something more or different--I don't mean more in a sense of better, but just something. . . . It's got to be something different, because I like that, and I like the challenge, and I like trying new things, and . . . I like having choice to go into uncomfortable situations so that I can stretch myself. (Katrynia transcript, p. 30)

> What do I enjoy most? Probably the challenge, . . . just that whole challenge of tackling that and trying to figure that out. When I think about it, that's the most fun, because it's a big accomplishment. (Pssoh transcript, pp. 22-23)

The anxiety trait. Daelin, Maronja, Katrynia, and I spoke of ourselves as having been somewhat anxious, nervous, or self-conscious in our lives thus far. We tended to find this anxiety manifesting itself when faced with an important task or having to present ourselves publicly. We have all learned to cope with this and turn it into a strength whereby we prepare carefully, ensuring a maximum level of confidence. Surprisingly, this anxiety was not as prevalent when we were dealing with our students:

> Our whole family is really scared of public speaking, because . . . our parents didn't encourage us to speak. And when my dad would ask us to do something like that, . . . we were too shy. I don't really feel comfortable public speaking. . . . Speaking in front of my peers, . . . I get *so* nervous. But if I'm in front of a group of kids, I am not nervous at all; nothing fazes me. (Daelin transcript, p. 20)

> I think, as adults, we're less inclined to want to show . . . mistakes to our peers. . . . Maybe we feel that other people judge us more, whereas we don't feel that element in the classroom [with students]. (Maronja transcript, p. 4)

> I would say I'm frightened too. I'm frightened about the possibility of going into the inner city, but I'm also extremely excited about it, so I think it's a little of both. (Katrynia transcript, p. 30)

> With the support of caring friends and teachers, I gradually learned how to manage and cope with my rather sensitive and anxious nature, something I began to find I had more of than most others. (Hal memoir, p. 50)

The competitiveness trait. Jancek, Katrynia, Daelin, and I spoke of competition and our attributes and attitudes respecting this particular personality characteristic:

> I started playing ball [and hockey] at higher levels, and then I said, "No, it's just too competitive." So I've changed things a lot. The commitment that the child puts in on the field . . . is the amount of [playing] time that child's going to get. . . . Players will be rewarded on their commitment. (Jancek transcript, pp. 32-33)

> I have this real thing about awards. . . . How can we say that there is a best practice, and how can we put someone up on a pedestal, and we're all supposed to aspire to that one thing? "*What does that say*?" Do we do that with children in a classroom? Do we say, "Here's the best. . . . Let's all try to be writers like Sarah, or let's all try to be mathematicians like Nicholai"? I think that's insane. We can give those children praise and feedback and all of that kind of thing. (Katrynia transcript, pp. 16-17)

> I think I must have been born with a competitive nature. The earliest memories recorded in my cerebrum include the exhilaration and thrill of a competitive situation. (Hal memoir, p. 74)

The leadership trait. Jancek, Katrynia, Pssoh, and I described the leadership abilities we perceived ourselves to have exhibited throughout our lives. Underlying this description was the sense that leadership qualities are important for success as an educator:

> Out of all the kids in that school that year, I received this big award. It changed my life that night . . . when they told me that I was a great leader. . . . My mom always said I was a born leader and that I had a way of

> always turning a bad situation into a very positive one. (Jancek transcript, p. 20)

> I was the leader of the pack in most of my elementary. I was kind of a bossy kind of kid, and there's still a little bit of that in me right now. I'm not a quiet person on staff, and I'm not somebody who will sit back and just kind of take things. (Katrynia transcript, p.12)

> I think in some ways that those qualities I learned from my dad, because he was a leader in the community too, and he was respected, so I kind of grew up looking at him and thinking, Okay, so that's how you do it. He had a lot of leadership ability, and at the time, again, you're not aware of it; you're not really thinking these are things you're picking up. But I think it was informal education, watching him and how he dealt with problems and how he dealt with people. (Pssoh transcript, p. 13

The trust and honesty trait. Jancek, Maronja, Pssoh, and I explicitly spoke to the importance of honesty and trust in our educator beings. We saw ourselves as very honest people and felt this was an important quality in our make-up, outfitting us for educating:

> When you're dealing with junior high students, you have to be extremely honest. (Jancek transcript, p. 18)

> I've always said to my students, . . . "The most important thing to me is that you're honest with me. We can solve just about anything, as long as you're honest about it, because otherwise you have no basis to start on." (Maronja transcript, p.5)

> I think if you talk to the teachers now they would feel that there's a sense of trust and they think that the board is there, actually concerned about student well-being and staff well-being. And the teachers now say, "Yes the board is here. They're good. We can trust them." . . . To me that was an important goal to achieve. (Pssoh transcript, pp. 25-26)

The forgiveness trait. Jancek, Maronja, and I spoke to the importance of forgiving those who had wronged us, and the freedom that ensued upon granting that forgiveness. For me it was one of my characteristics that helped in shaping me as an educator:

> I felt sorry, so I said, . . . "Enough is enough." There's been a lot of hurt. . . . I've always liked to put things on the back burner, and . . . if I can be the one that says, . . . "I just want to make things nice." . . . I'm going to be the first one that's going to cross over and give. . . . I don't want to bear it any more. I want to move on. (Jancek transcript, pp. 36-38)

> Yes, "How many times should you forgive your neighbour?" I know: many times. (Jancek transcript, p. 42)

> But I guess I believe that sins can be forgiven and that if we ask for that forgiveness it's gone and that's the end of it, and we can all go to Heaven. (Maronja transcript, p. 41)

> Then I stopped myself, reflected, and remembered my spiritual source of strength. In that "still, quiet, moment," I heard again the voice of forgiveness and yielded my anger, my hurt, and my desire for retribution. I passed on earnest entreaties for that man. . . . I felt compassion for him and then found, deep within myself, the forgiveness that I needed. Again, I was at peace--a troublesome burden gone. (Hal memoir, p. 67)

The perfectionism trait. Daelin and I saw ourselves as somewhat perfectionistic, having high standards and expectations for themselves. For me it also manifested in a strong desire to succeed and excel at whatever task I undertook. We saw this as a character trait that was useful in educators, in that it causes us to work very hard, ensuring that our students grow and develop as they should:

> I would say that I'm a perfectionist, and I like things to be done a certain way and to a certain standard. . . . I'm very slow at things. It takes me a long time to do one thing, . . . because when I'm lesson planning I try to think of, "What will I do if this happens?" and I try to think of a few modifications for the other students because not all students have the same way of learning, nor are they all at the same level. . . . I think you're harder on yourself than on others. (Daelin transcript, p. 23)

> My achievement drive manifested itself progressively more and more as my competencies and confidence increased with age. Today I still aspire to have the most effective educational operation possible, and never seem to be satisfied that I have it. However, the wisdom and experience of life and a striving nature have also schooled me in how to moderate my perfectionism, turning it into a strength. In the end, I believe my students, staff, and community benefit from my efforts as I constantly strive to improve the opportunities for students, the working conditions of

> employees, and the overall quality of the school system. (Hal memoir, pp. 75-76)

The analytical and self-evaluative trait. Pssoh and Daelin spoke of themselves as being analytical and self-evaluative, a quality they saw as important for an educator:

> In another way it kind of encouraged me to say, . . . "That is a really good question, and next time somebody asks, I'm going to know what to tell them." So it motivated me to talk to other people and ask, . . . "Why do you think this is the way it is?" (Pssoh transcript, pp. 12-13)

> Everything that I experienced . . . helped me become more self-reflective, which is important in being a teacher . . . because you need to look at a lesson and say, "Okay, how well did that go? What worked with the kids? What did they like? What was the most effective?" . . . So you can change those things and improve on it so that it does work the next time that you implement it. And it's not always the same for every group of kids. (Daelin transcript, p. 8)

The humour trait. Pssoh and I alluded to a sense of humour as part of our personality make-up. I believe this trait was one of the influential factors in preparing me to become an educator:

> I remember . . . chasing kids one time out of the junior high. . . . They were in trouble, and they were at the principal's office, and they just bolted. The door was open and they thought, "I'm escaping." . . . Boom! they were gone. And we were all just standing in the office . . . foyer . . . looking at each other: What do you do? And I just remember everybody saying, "Run after them!" and I just took off. But that was kind of a funny experience. (Pssoh transcript, p. 11)

> I have a "twinkling in my eye" and love the lighter side of life, but I am not sure when or how it developed in my being. I feel it must be very much a hereditary feature, for my early reminiscings bring to mind family gatherings and activities filled with humour and amusement. (Hal memoir, p. 76)

> As an educator, I've livened up my teaching with humour, and used it in my constant interactions with people. It builds bonds, provides spice and flavour to life, and, most of all, gets us through some of the more difficult times. A big smile and a hearty laugh drive the demons of darkness away. (Hal memoir, p. 78)

Of Reflection and Introspection

When one sits in deep conversation with another, it is inevitable that there is stimulation for mutual introspection and self-reflection. It seems that we often need these mirrors of other people and other ideas to help us clearly see who we are and where we are going. In the conversational gathering of field texts in this study, it became evident that this introspection phenomenon was loosed. This theme of "becoming more self-reflective" was an unintended and unanticipated by-product of the main research focus. Nonetheless, it is a welcome addition to the findings of this work.

Becoming more self-reflective. All of us found the experience of growing older and more knowledgeable or being involved in this study making us more self-reflective and self-analytical. Some of us even discovered new things about ourselves.

> Only recently did I realize that what I had done all those years with the figure skating club was the beginning of my teaching career. I can't believe I didn't even think of becoming a teacher when I started teaching skating. (Daelin narrative, p. 1)

> Should have done it [become an educator] fifteen years ago. But you know what? Maybe not. I would have been a different teacher fifteen years ago if I had not had all the rich experiences that I've had over the last fourteen years. (Jancek transcript, p. 46)

> But particularly as an adult, I think too, I can go and tell my mom and dad anything. I can tell them my failures in life, and it's okay. . . . They really try and help me make sense of it and see what I learned out of it, and sometimes when you're the person in that story, that's not always very easy to do. . . . Sometimes they really make me think about my students; they're focused on that. . . . And I think they've always really helped me stay focused on what's important in teaching and not get caught up in some of that other stuff. (Maronja transcript, p. 17)

> I know we make mistakes, and I often wonder when I make mistakes in the classroom even now, again about that impact, the long-term impact. (Katrynia transcript, p. 10)

> And I reflect a lot. If I didn't reflect I wouldn't be in teaching. (Jancek transcript, p. 14)

Field Texts Restoried

As I lay still listening, immersed in that field of texts, I did hear the corn singing, the stars laughing, the rocks humming, and the texts telling. I studied and listened intently in that abundant garden, and those texts told me a tale, jewel rich in storied themes. It is a tale of wealth that I interpreted for the reader. These valuables are the thematic descriptions of those influences that shaped us to become educators. They came in three treasure chests: primary influencers, secondary influencers, and introspective self-reflection.

The primary treasure consisted of those influences that we felt strongly about and clearly identified as key guides along our path to becoming. The field texts told us that the most poignant and obvious sculptor was the consequence of positive experiences with special teachers. Negative experiences with teachers were also a powerful shaper, motivating us to improve education and not repeat those mistakes. For some of us, the love for a particular subject area caused us to want to continue educating in that area. The impact of parents and extended family was monumental on each of us, playing a powerful role in molding us to become educators. Each of us had experienced marginalization in some way, an encountering that made us zealously egalitarian educators. Our spirituality was a puissant force in our becoming, channeling us and molding us into the educators we are and will be. There was also a collection of personality attributes that played a pivotal role in influencing us to become educators.

These were a serving and helping nature, the drive to understand and care for others, a joy in seeing others grow and develop, and a belief in the importance of teaching.

The secondary treasure chest contained an aggregation of our attributes and aspects that were not explicitly stated as primary causal factors in our becomings; however, because of their complex integration into our holistic beings, they inevitably play a part in our life course, past, present, and future. These aspects were perceived as related to our educator path and supportive of effective educator practice. This mother lode includes a collection of character traits and attitudes that were and are influential in our becoming as educators. They are a social orientation, high moral standards and principles, a demanding for fairness and justice, an approval-seeking nature, a persevering nature, a need for variety and challenge, an anxiousness and self-consciousness growing out of a desire to do well and be accepted, varying attitudes about competitiveness, leadership abilities, trust and honesty, an ability to forgive, a perfectionistic tendency, an analytical and self-evaluative nature, and a sense of humour.

The third cache of treasure is an outgrowth of the whole process. It does not relate specifically to our vocational path; rather, it is a derivative of the research process and the information shared within. Here the field texts tell us that there is self-reflection and introspection that comes with life, increasing age and wisdom, and involvement in this study. Together these three troves of treasure tell us a story of why and how we came to be educators. This story will now be further refined in the ensuing chapters.

CHAPTER VII

The Stories Come Together: A Theory

A story, in other words, is a
theory of something.
--Carter, *The Place of Story* . . .

On Theory

As I trudge through the hardening drifts, a howling wind persistently tugs at my clothing and sends snow swirling around my body. An hour earlier, the calm, cold mid-day landscape was a study in drab contrasts. The unbroken whiteness of the field stopped abruptly as it met the stark grey wood-lot, which in turn painted itself sharply against the dullness of a muted silver sky. But the tone and texture of that sky had been a premonition. Now it is here. Through squinted eyes and frozen lashes, I see wind-driven snow intensify, transforming the scene into a uniform ghostly haze of reduced visibility and wailing fury. Struggling forward against the blast, I lean into its force, head turned sideways to ease the biting sting of wind chill and storm-driven pellets assaulting my face. It is truly an Alberta parkland blizzard, but in my 10-year-old imagination it becomes the *buran*, one of those Siberian snowstorms of awe-inspiring dimensions, one of those that tests the mettle of all life in its path. I become a Samoyed tribesman caught out in the *buran*, far from the safety and comfort of my camp.

Although my afternoon pursuit was intended to be the construction of a "snow house," the tempest excites my imagination even further, and I am now inspired with a survivalist instinct. Armed only with a short spade, I continue my quarter-mile march to the large drifts in the southeast corner of the field. In spite of my "long-john" underwear,

woolen socks, denim trousers, fleece-lined parka, flannel scarf, "ear-flapped" cap, overshoes, and leather mittens with woolen liners, the cold is well entrenched when I arrive. With numbed nose, cheeks, fingers, and toes, I promptly begin my spadework as the *buran* strengthens unabated. I hastily excavate a three-cubic-foot hole in a large drift and cut "igloo blocks." These are one-foot square and four-inches thick, taken from the hard outer crust of surrounding drifts. Standing on ground level in the cavity, I gain some shelter from the vicious gale as I place the snow blocks around me with the skill of a seasoned mason. Knowing from past experience that my skill is insufficient to create a domed roof, I resort to a flat roof of snow blocks laid over a light framework of sticks. With the roof on, I quickly shovel out snow that has drifted inside during construction. I then spread a layer of loose snow over the entire outside to fill any cracks and holes. Finally, I place a quickly gathered armfull of dry yellow field grass on the floor, and a rectangular snow block door, leeward of course. Thus my shelter is made complete.

As the buran rages outside, I pridefully settle into my domicile, surely the envy of any Samoyed tribesman. There is a certain sense of accomplishment and comfort, almost cosiness, in hearing that angry turmoil without, unable to reach behind these protective walls. Yet a gnawing reminder interrupts what otherwise might have been a momentary euphoria in my Siberian reverie. Although my fingers have warmed some with the fabrication handiwork, my toes are now excruciatingly cold. It was less noticeable while I was on my feet working, but now at rest, the full brunt comes forth. It is a dull, throbbing numbness enveloping all 10 toes, culminating in a powerful sensation of continuous deep pain, most intense in each big toe. Drawing on my experience and wisdom, I immediately begin wiggling and moving them in the hope that they will be

revived. Unsuccessful, I resort to massaging them through my overshoes, and then to an urgent dancing on my haunches, the low ceiling limiting upright stance.

Although a continuation of these interventions may well have prevailed, my tolerance for pain was insufficient. In an anguish of suffering tears, I vacated my shelter and, venturing out into the blizzard, headed for home "on the dead run." In spite of deep snow, poor visibility, and settling darkness, I knew exactly where to go and how to get there. Fortunately, the icy gale was at my back and five minutes of running, falling, wading, wallowing, and walking finally got me to the house. In a chaos of flurries, vapour, frosted clothing, and caked snow falling from me, I burst inside, quietly sobbing as I explained my plight to Mom. She was sympathetic and glad to see me, given the storm and late afternoon drawing nigh. On her advice, I took care not to worsen the aching in my toes by warming them too quickly. For that reason, I bathed them in room temperature water, hence avoiding the added misery of "chilblains." Assisted with a steaming cup of hot cocoa, I was gradually restored to full recovery.

Later, lounging in the "front room" and working on a jigsaw puzzle, I basked in the warmth of a blazing fire in the old "air-tight" heater. There was quiet satisfaction in knowing it burned the wooden "heater blocks" I had stored in earlier, now neatly stacked outdoors near the doorway. There on the outside, the wind whistled and groaned, shaking the house and causing it to creak. Looking into the darkness through the clear centers of heavily-frosted windows, the light from within captured the fine snowflakes eddying about. The scene induced that cosy, comfortable, secure sense that I had experienced for a moment in my "snow house" that afternoon. My thoughts returned to Siberia, Samoyeds, *burans*, and *cold toes*--such a continuous plague as I undertook my

winter activities. Lamenting the fact that freezing feet had terminated my adventure, I was just beginning to wonder why this was such a torment for me when Mom came by the table. She asked me how I had gotten so many pieces of the puzzle together already. I explained how I looked at the picture on the puzzle box and then picked out all of the pieces that seemed to relate to a particular distinctive feature of the picture. These were then easily placed by matching the shapes and colors. She said, "That sounds like a good theory," and moved on about her chores.

"A good theory," I thought as I resumed my musing, contemplating why my feet got so cold and how I might avoid that fate another time. What was my theory explaining that unfortunate circumstance? I knew that when I played with the neighbour boys in winter they didn't wear leather shoes inside "buckle-up" overshoes like I did. They wore calf-high "felt-socks" with low rubbers over the foot. Like me, they also wore heavy woolen socks underneath, but they seemed able to tolerate more cold than I. Carefully thinking about the thickness and insulating capacity of their "felt socks," I realized that my leather "oxfords" inside rubber overshoes were no match. I had a theory. My feet refrigerated quickly and were hard to revive because of the poor insulating capacity of my footwear. The superior insulating quality of the felt boots would alleviate this problem. This theory proved dependable in future winters of adventure and "doing chores," with my feet snug and warm inside felt-lined boots.

The nature. The *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (Brown,1993) defined theory as "a way of doing something, a systematic statement of rules or principles to be followed . . . [or] a system of ideas or statements explaining something" (p. 3274). Further, Coles (1989, p. 20) described how his mentor taught that the key etymological

root of "theory" is the Greek "*themai*" meaning "I behold." This "beholding," Coles understood to be a sensory experience like taking in a theatre production. He concluded that a theory is the enlargement of a mental visualization derived from such an experience. Carter (1993, p. 9) expanded this notion, suggesting that the stories of our experiences are really theories revealing our belief systems. As Paul Valery (as cited in Smith, 1994) concluded, "There is no theory that is not a fragment, carefully prepared, of some autobiography" (p. 293).

Hence, for me, theories are my stories to live by. They are stories providing templates to guide me as I tread the paths of life. They are stories that explain and help me to understand the esoteric and arcane phenomena encountered along the way. As illustrated in my winter tale above, they are guiding stories: on how to read the weather, how to survive in a hostile climate, and how to build a snow house. They are explaining stories: on jigsaw puzzle workings, why clothing keeps one warm in the winter, what causes chilblains, and why the house creaks in a strong wind. As I negotiate life's terrain, some of these stories are garnered from outside sources, but many, if not most, come from within me. They are a part of my unwritten autobiography.

Although we live and act according to these storied theories moment by moment, some of them seem to just happen, to be there implicitly, somewhere beyond our capacity to verbalize them. It is a phenomenon that leaves us with questions: "Why did I do it that way? How did I know how to do that? How did I understand that?" These theories are the unconscious offerings of that tacit reservoir deep within ourselves. Hence, taking Coles' (1989, p. 20) understanding a bit further, there is often an aspect of revelation in discovering these theories, where we indeed exclaim, "I behold!" or "Eureka!" As

Polanyi (1966) wrote, with respect to tacit knowledge, "We can know more than we can tell" (p. 4). He described the process of discovering this hidden knowledge as being "personal and indeterminate" (p. 75), a process that starts with

> solitary intimations of a problem, of bits and pieces here and there which seem to offer clues to something hidden, . . . like fragments of a yet unknown whole. This tentative vision must turn into a personal obsession; for a problem that does not worry us is no problem: there is no drive in it, it does not exist. This obsession, which spurs and guides us, is about something that no one can tell: its content is undefinable, indeterminate, strictly personal. Indeed, the forces by which it will be brought to light will be acknowledged as a discovery precisely because it could not have been achieved by any persistence in applying explicit rules to given facts. The true discoverer will be acclaimed for the daring feat of his imagination, which crossed uncharted seas of possible thought. (pp. 75-76)

In crossing these seas, exploring and discovering, we researchers are, as Carter (1993) stated, story makers, "deciding what to tell and what to leave out and imposing structure and meaning on events" (p. 9). She added, "The coherency stories achieve reflects the 'moralizing impulse' . . . of the teller. A story, in other words, is a theory of something" (p. 9). It is, as McMillen (1995) described, "a new kind of storytelling that 'crosses the border' over to theoretical concerns" (p. 2).

However, this storied "border crossing" is not without roadblocks and detours. Clandinin and Connelly (1995, pp. 5-8) drew attention to the "epistemological dilemmas" (p. 5) created by the traditional conception of theory as it relates to practice. In this view, theory and practice are depicted as two distinct and dichotomous entities--"separate domains" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p. 87). These dilemmas are perhaps well portrayed in the familiar dictum, "That's good in theory, but it won't work in practice." The writers' hope was that their research would contribute to "a breakdown in the sacred theory-practice story and the creation of new relational stories of theory and

practice" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, p. 163). In an earlier work, Connelly and Clandinin (1988) set out a vision of how the new stories might be created, hence bringing "these apparently very different worlds of theory and practice together in such a way as to serve common curriculum ends" (p. 88). Drawn from the philosopher McKeon, they explained their view of how theory and practice should be related. This vision is characterized as the way of "dialectic" (p. 95):

> McKeon's dialectic views theory and practice as inseparable. Problems of theory are seen in practice, and vice versa. Indeed, practice is theory in action. There is no essential dichotomy. According to this view the practical constitutes a kind of proof, so that if theoretical notions and practice are incompatible, it is theory rather than practice that is seen to be at fault. (p. 95)

It is to this dialectic notion that I ascribe in this research. It is the "notion that theory and practice are reflections of one another" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988, p. 269). It is dialectical because it brings about a continuous reunification of what have been unnaturally made into opposites. It is a rejoining that reinstates within our beings "narrative unity, . . . a continuum within a person's experience which renders life experiences meaningful though the unity they achieve for the person" (p. 280). Hence, as I studied and interpreted the stories of our becomings in this research, I recognized their emergence from the practice of our lives. I then saw patterns where the stories came together, converging into a metamorphosis of new understanding. And, like the butterfly emerging from its cocoon, this new comprehension, emanating from our personal practical knowledge, was captured, verbalized, and restoried as a theory. As Strauss and Corbin (1990) stated, "Formulating theoretical interpretations of data grounded in reality provides a powerful means . . . for understanding the world 'out there'" (p. 9). Thus the

main focus of this chapter is to portray this theory--a system of ideas or statements explaining those influences that led us to become educators.

A Theory of Becoming

It is clear that for the participants and me, the story of our destinies to become educators had a common genesis in two areas. These are, as Clandinin and Connelly (1994) described, the "internal and existential dimensions" (p. 416) of our experience. The internal dimension contains the stories of our personality attributes, those we inherited genetically and those that have evolved as a result of our socialization. These attributes include our "feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions, moral dispositions, and so on" (p. 417). The existential dimension consists of our outward experiences with the environment during that socialization, something that continues up to the present. Rather than being discrete and separate entities, these internal and existential dimensions blend together, intertwining in an inextricable complication of narrative unity throughout our socialization story. This story, broadly speaking, is a result of our ongoing interaction with the universal landscape of life. As well, our experiences with that socialization include some of the more ephemeral, intuitive, and perhaps "metaphysical" aspects of our connections with the cosmos. This common genesis, a truth that was anticipated from the onset of the research, reveals an essence of what influenced our becomings--those becomings which make up a significant part of the selves we are today. It yields a theory of our becomings.

The process. My experience in this research has been similar to that related by Smith (1988), where he "spent considerable time observing personal and interpersonal events in educational settings, constructing a descriptive narrative, and generating

explanatory middle-range theories of those events" (p. 46). He culminated this inductive, theory-generating work with a project where he actually derived theory from the analysis of a novel, C. P. Snow's *Strangers and Brothers*. Because of his association with narrative elements in his theory generation, I chose to use the process recommended by Smith as I capture the theory emerging from my findings. In his *Reflections on Trying to Theorize From Ethnographic Data*, Smith (1974, p. 18) described a theoretical model as consisting of two or more interrelated propositions. Each proposition, in turn, contains two concepts stated in a cause/effect relationship. The concept he characterized as an abstraction representing a class of events. Baldamus (1982, p. 218), in his treatise on sociological theorizing, described the derivation of concepts as the perpetual reorganizing and restructuring of symbols representing the core meanings emerging from the field texts. Although he advocated seeking out extant conceptual frameworks into which one's emergent concepts might be placed, he did acknowledge the possibility of inventing one's own.

In my study, the reorganization and restructuring of these symbols during data analysis gave rise to descriptive themes emerging from the field texts. These themes were then given conceptual labels commensurate with their content and logically related to the main research question. These labelled abstractions, paired as propositions, were then placed into a conceptual framework specifically created for this study, a main function of the theory-generating process. Respecting Smith's (1974) reference to a "cause/effect" (p. 18) relationship between the concepts within a proposition, I preferred to treat it as an influence relationship. As explained earlier in this research text, the attribution of exact causes is precluded by the dynamic and complicated interrelationship

of factors within the holistic narrative unity of our lives. Hence, it is usually more accurate and realistic to acknowledge an influence relationship rather than a causal one.

With respect to the type of theory I generated in this research, Glaser and Strauss (1967) provided useful insight. They distinguished between the concepts of substantive and formal theory.

> By substantive theory we mean theory developed for a substantive or empirical area of sociological inquiry, such as patient care, race relations, professional education, delinquency, or research organization. By formal theory, we mean that developed for a formal, or conceptual, area of sociological inquiry, such as stigma, deviant behavior, formal organization, socialization, status congruency, authority and power, reward systems, or social mobility. (p. 32)

They clarify that both substantive and formal theory "may be considered 'middle-range,' that is, they fall between the 'minor working hypotheses' of everyday life and the 'all-inclusive' grand theories" (pp. 32-33). According to these distinctions it is clear that the theory emerging from my research was substantive. The focus of the study and the nature of the findings were too specific to qualify as formal theory. Thus, what follows is a substantive, middle-range theory. And a good middle-range theory is like a good "middle-earth" story, where Tolkien (1996, 1997) captured the essence of Bilbo and Frodo Baggins' journeys in quest of the "ring." Hence, this theory captured the essence of our journey to become educators, the quest for our vocation.

The theoretical model. Entitled *Influences Shaping Individuals to Become Educators*, this theoretical model is composed of a series of interrelated propositions. These propositions explain the relationships among concepts derived from the thematic analysis; namely, those factors that influenced us to become educators. To assuage Edel's (1984) lament that "the fabulous and magical, the tales of man as a creative

enigma, give way now to the exactitudes of science" (p. 24), I also portray this theory as a story--but first the propositions.

- ***Proposition one***: The general parent influences of providing a safe, secure, and loving environment; instilling high standards and expectations; maintaining a positive emphasis on education; and ingraining the value of industriousness and hard work were instrumental in creating the individual, a continuing process.
- ***Proposition two***: The individual, through heredity and experience, is imbued with and continuously shaped by the secondary influencer traits: a social orientation, high moral and ethical standards and principles, a passion for fairness and justice, an approval-seeking desire to please others, a persevering drive, a need for variety and challenge, anxiousness about performing well, attitudes about competition, leadership skills, a valuing of trust and honesty, forgivness, perfectionistism, analysis and self-evaluation, and a sense of humour.
- ***Proposition three***: The individual imbued or being imbued with secondary influencer traits was and is directly shaped by the primary influencers of a personal spirituality, serendipitous synchronicities, marginalization experiences, parent effect on vocational choice, negative teacher experiences, a serving and helping trait, a caring and understanding trait, a joy in seeing others grow and develop, a love of subject area, and a belief in the importance of teaching.
- ***Proposition four***: A positive and powerfully catalysing experience with a very special teacher(s) culminated the influencing process for the individual already being shaped as an educator, channelling the person to choose an educational vocation.

- ***Proposition five***: This intricate web of influencing factors contains an inextricable interrelationship of cause-and-effect connections among them. These complex relationships are dynamic and synergistic, indeterminable in their holistic entanglement, hence, beyond our capacity to explain fully.
- ***Proposition six***: The process of being socialized, being educated, growing older, and being engaged in this research influenced the participants to become more introspective and self-reflective.

Figure 1, *A Theoretical Model of Influences Shaping Individuals to Become Educators*, is an illustration of the theory presented in the preceding propositions. This pictorial representation was created according to Smith's (1974, pp. 18-20) guidelines. The model includes all of the key concepts and relationships discovered in this research.

The storied theory. As earlier alluded to, this theory conjures my reminiscences of J. R. R. Tolkien's (1996, 1997)novels, *The Hobbit*, and the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Hence, it will be cast in similar manner, the story of an adventuresome journey:

> Once upon a time in the distant land of Middle Earth, there lived six Hobbits. When they were very young they lived safely and comfortably in the Shire. Secure in the cosiness of their hobbit hole houses, they were loved and cherished by their parents. The elder Hobbits had high standards and expectations for them, always emphasizing industriousness, hard work, and the value of a good education. Through their Hobbit genes and upbringing, they developed fine character traits. They became very social and enjoyed the company of other Hobbits, seeking the acceptance of meeting others' approval. They developed high moral and ethical standards, having a passion to see fairness and justice served, also valuing trust, honesty, and forgiveness. They had a need for variety and challenge, a persevering drive, and leadership skills, but were somewhat anxious about performing well and being acknowledged for it. While they had varying attitudes about competition and perfectionism, all enjoyed a sense of humour. They were good Hobbits, a credit to the Shire.
>
> One day, a different day for each of them, Gandalf the wizard came to visit and imbued them all with a yearning to seek out their fortune beyond the

Shire's boundaries. So it came to pass that each of the Hobbits set out on a separate journey of adventure to find its rightful place--its "ring." Although they continued to grow and develop from their Hobbit heritage, they began to encounter new influences as they travelled. These influences shaped their paths and their development as Hobbits. Across the Brandywine River in the Misty Mountains, they encountered their own personal spirituality with its serendipitous synchronicities. In the forest darkness of the Mirkwood and Fanghorn they had negative experiences at the hands of Trolls, Goblins, and Ringwraithes. And each of them met their own "Gollum," who tried to keep them from grasping their ring. They knew the pain of marginalization, for themselves and those in their parties. As they ventured on, they remembered the elder Hobbits' directions and aspirations for them. In friendlier lands, Rohan of the "Big Folk" and the Iron Hills of the Dwarves, they were further molded by their own serving, helping, caring, and understanding traits. They had joy in being a part of others' growth, development, and fulfillment. They grew to love some "ring studies" and believed in the importance of its quest.

Then one day, a different day for each Hobbit, every one of them had a momentous encounter with a wonderfully positive mentor. One met Elrond the Elfin King, another met Galadriel the Elfin Queen, one met Gimli the Dwarf, another met Beorn the Berserker, still another met Treebeard, and the last met Tom Bombadil. Through the magic of Gandalf, each was guided to an encounter with the right mentor. The mentor confirmed in each of them their desire to seek the ring, and then showed them the shortest and surest route to finding it. Further, it was through the magic of Gandalf that all of the influences along their journey and before conspired together, leading each of them to their ring. Hence, one by one, each of the six Hobbits found their respective ring and moved to their proper place in Middle Earth. When they were older, guardians of the rings they possessed, they looked back and reflected, introspectively remembering their adventurous journeys of quest. As they reflected, they understood themselves better and found new insights. They were all glad they had claimed their respective rings and each pledged to continue carrying out the work of the ring, always seeking to improve.

And like the Hobbits of the story, it did come to pass that Daelin, Jancek, Maronja, Katrynia, Pssoh, and Hal each found their special ring--a vocation as an educator. For each, the quest was different, routes travelled through many variations of landscape and inhabitants. But in the end each of them arrived safely and happily, now living out their continuing stories as educators.

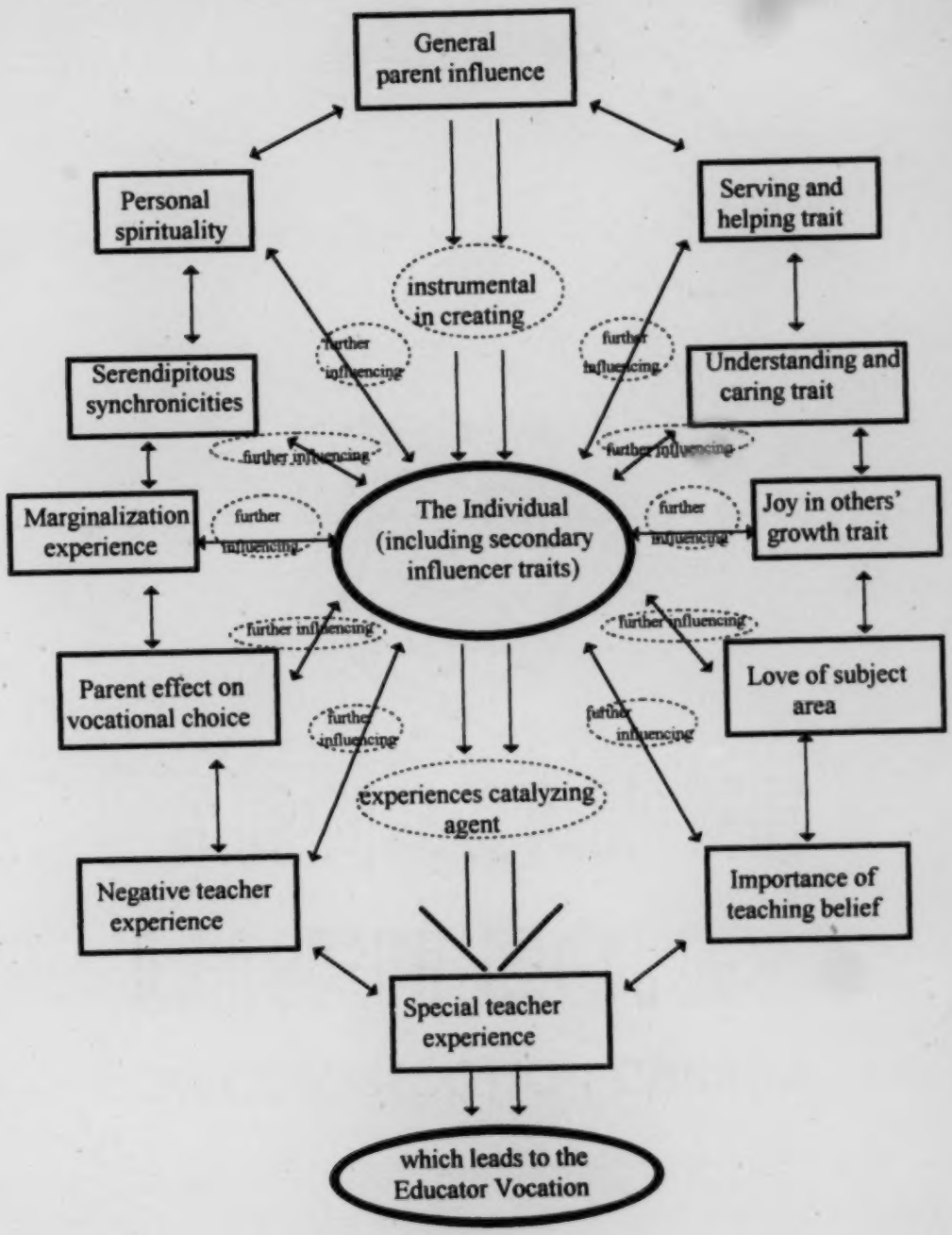

Figure 1: A Theoretical Model of Influences Shaping Individuals to Become Educators

Relative To Other Theory

The findings of this study and the theory emerging from them bear relationships to the narratives of theory, research, and practice reviewed earlier in the "literature story" of this research text. In this section I discuss these relationships.

Self-understanding. The participants and I found that as we grew older, became more educated, and engaged in activities such as this research, we became more self-reflective and introspective. Some of us found new insights about ourselves as a result of being involved in the study. For me, this was the primary objective of the research, to gain a deeper understanding of myself. The contention advanced by Covey (1989, p. 15), Bateson (1989, p. 13), and Coles (1989, p. 139) that people do have an inner hunger to know themselves more fully is borne out by the results of this study. The fact that they seek after that deeper self-knowing, the thesis of Morgan (1997, pp. 215-220) and Peck (1978, pp. 44-46), was also confirmed in my results. The findings are also consistent with the conclusion of Morgan (1997, pp. 215-220), Schein (1996, p. 236), Leithwood et al. (1993, pp. 372-373), Plager (1994, p. 65), and Peck (1978, p. 312) that people often need a stimulus to help them embark on the road to self-discovery. In this case it was age, education, and this study that were the catalysts. Finally, as Conle (1996, p. 320) and Kerby (1991, pp. 3-8) stated, we gain this deeper knowing of self through the loquacious storied exchanges with fellow human beings, again a truth borne out in this research.

Personality characteristics. Ryckman (1982, p. 4) observed that theories describing the genesis of personality characteristics range from an almost total emphasis on biological or inherited determinants to the opposite polarity, emphasizing the effect of

socialization on behaviour. His observation illustrates that different theorists see different visions of the same truth, but place emphasis on one small element of it. My research has revealed to me a "narrative unity" within the participants' lives, a unity that speaks to a complex combination of hereditary and environmental factors influencing the ongoing manifestation of personal character traits--one unique to each person. This is consistent with Schein's (1980, pp. 48-49) statement about contingency theory in the study of human behaviour. The personality product is a holistic and complicated conflation of what Clandinin and Connelly (1994) described as the "internal and existential dimensions" (p. 416) of our experience. Neither is this fusion fixed; it is dynamic, ebbing and flowing with the fluidity of the universe.

With respect to supporting Jung's (1960, pp. 114-115) conception of the "collective unconscious" (p. 114), my findings are compelling, as they relate to the spiritual influence and advent of serendipitous synchonicities in participants' lives. Further, I would postulate that the "tacit dimension" of our knowledge, described by Polanyi (1966, pp. 3-25), is in large part drawn from this Jungian pool of "cosmic consciousness." My findings with respect to spirituality also support Jung's (1960, pp. 110-120) conception of a psychic energy flow, communicating among and joining the various components of one's conscious and unconscious personality. Respecting the Jungian typologies of extraversion and introversion, my study replicates Von Fange's (1961, pp. 105-110) findings, that educators tend to be extraverted people.

Personal experience. As acknowledged in the previous section, the primacy of personal experience in shaping our becomings is self evident. Nonetheless, consistent with Schein (1978, p. 24, 1980, p. 40), our findings of influencing experiences simply

underscore that truth. This result is also in harmony with Eisner (1988, p. 15) and Clandinin and Connelly (1995, p. 7) in their assertion that all knowledge is rooted in experience. The way the participants related these experiences in storied form also supports Clandinin and Connelly's (1994, p. 415) claim that stories are the closest we can come to experience, as we tell of it. Without doubt, the participants and I also found that Conle's (1996, p. 307) concept of "resonance" (p. 299) was verified in our experience, one person's story stimulating still another in the listener. My finding that learning, the accumlating wisdom of age, and experience in this study stimulated introspection in the participants validates, at least in this setting, Dewey's (1938; as cited in Boydston & Levine, 1988, p. 22) declaration that experience is education. Also substantiated in my study were the research results of Tardif (1984, p. 174-176) and Ewing (1993, p. 67), showing that past experience was influential in people's choice to become educators.

Vocational path motivation. My findings strongly supported Howard and Scheffler's (1995, pp. 9-23) notion that the concept of vocation is either a divine calling or at least a career for which one has special aptitude and aspiration. All of us felt this strongly about our choice to become an educator and our practice thereof. The complex myriad of intertwined motivating factors found to be channelling us in this becoming supports the postulation of Schein (1980, p. 39), Lock (1996, pp. 153-154), and Hoy and Miskel (1996, pp. 98-99) that no single theory can explain all human motivation all of the time. Relating to Lock's (1996, pp. 3-4) classifications of vocation path motivation, I found that we were influenced by a complex mixture of "rational systematic," "sociocultural determinant," and "accidental" factors--not any one or two alone. In

particular, finding the marginalization theme, unexpectedly I might add, lent credence to the sociocultural factor.

I found that I could plot our vocational paths onto the framework of Schein's (1978, pp. 20-23) theory of life and career stages. All of us except Jancek made our decisions to become educators while in the "adolescence to early thirties" (p. 29) stage of the biosocial life cycle. Jancek made his decision during the "mid thirties transition" (p. 29) stage, something that was more difficult for him than for us deciding earlier, for whereas Daelin, Maronja, Katrynia, and I were all in the "single adult" (p. 50) stage of the family life cycle, Jancek was in the "parent of young child" (p. 50) stage. And for purposes of the career life cycle, whereas we were in the "exploration and entry into work" (pp. 42-43) stage, he was in the "midcareer crisis" (p. 43) stage--of another unrelated career. Although not as complex as Jancek's, Pssoh also had a somewhat more complicated route than the rest of us. Even though his actual choice was made in the earliest stage of the biosocial life cycle, he was in the same family life cycle as Jancek, and in the "full membership" (p. 42) stage of the career life cycle, as well as in another career, when he chose to become an educator. Hence, my findings are in keeping with Schein's theoretical position.

My results are also consistent with Super's development theory (Super & Bohn, 1970, pp. 136-141). The narrative unity with which our "stories of becoming" unfolded showed vocational development to be a natural part of our overall human growth. This natural growth includes the development and implementation of our self-concepts, the basic logic of Super's vocational development theory. Evidence of this development and implementation of self-concept was rife in our stories of experiences and traits that

influenced us in our vocational choice. With respect to Super's "vocational life stages" (p. 136), Daelin, Maronja, Katrynia, and I all made our choices during the "exploration stage" (p. 136), whereas Jancek and Pssoh made theirs during the "establishment stage" (p. 136). Overall, our vocational path journeys were labours in finding ourselves, a process that continues unabated--now and into the future.

The motivational themes revealed by Newman (1998, pp. 4-5) and Parkay and Hardcastle Stanford (1995, pp. 4-7) were also found in this research. Consistent with their findings were my themes of serving, helping, caring, understanding, and enjoying interaction with other people. Also common were themes about the love of subject area, the importance of teaching, and the influence of teachers on the student participant. In dissonance with their results, I found strong themes in parent influence, marginalization experiences, and personal spirituality. Although I can understand the marginalization and spirituality themes as being unexpectedly unique to my purposive selection of participants, I cannot fathom the absence of parent influence as a theme in the findings of their large-scale-research. Paproski (1990, pp. 159-169), however, did reveal the parent-influence theme in his research, in addition to personality traits and socialization experiences, also consistent with my findings.

Memory. The conduct of this study was as Kerby (1991, p. 16) stated, solely dependent upon the reconstruction of our pasts. As Zinsser (1987, p. 27) predicted, when I wrote about one memory, I discovered I was in fact replacing it with a new one. Also as Zinsser stated, I found that when dealing with incomplete recollections, it was the meaning that counted more than the exact historicity of the recounting. I likewise found the act of exploring my past a healing experience, as foretold by Hoffman (1994, pp. 1-4)

and Dewey (as cited in Boydston, 1977, p. 5). And as Schacter (1996) advised, I found that "the beginnings of life stories are written in our families, and when we try to make sense of these stories . . . it is often to the family we return" (p. 279). As well, I learned what Schacter meant when he said the fragile sense of memory provides us with only a general sense of who we are and where we have been. The exploration of self is a complex enterprise.

Theory Restoried

In this chapter the stories came together to create an epic of meaning and explained relationships. In the beginning a winter tale spoke of the theory, active within our personal practical knowledge, and how it is often raised to an explicit level. The nature of theory was then explored, demonstrating its narrative application and providing a background for the propositional, illustrated, and storied presentation of a theory explaining how we came to be educators. This theory explained relationships among the influencing factors we attributed to our vocational path, hence revealing a holistic and indeterminable complexity of causal connections. The theory and its component concepts then demonstrated its harmony with the content of other theory, research, and practice reported earlier in this research text. It is a good theory; it is a theory of our becomings and our ongoings.

CHAPTER VIII

To Live a New Story

The Lord came and stood there calling,
as at other times. . .Then Samuel said
'speak for your servant is listening.'
--I Sam. 3:10, *New International Version*

Of My Calling

The arthritic aggravation in my aging hip tells me of a half-hour walk since leaving home. In a much more positive, gentle, and happy tone, the sun tells me that late morning is nigh, this glorious spring day. That radiant orb seems to understand my discomfort and sympathetically bathes me in regenerative warmth. Also a grateful beneficiary of its generosity is the awakening meadow through which I pass, its carpet beaming in the luminance. A backward glance confirms the town fading behind me as I meander across the clearing and approach my hill-top destination. As it diminishes into the distance, my thoughts and cares about "town things" wane proportionally. Domestic cares, local politics, university courses, and doctoral deadlines all begin to dissolve. Even that callous arthritic reminder abates, allowing me temporary oblivion to the erosion of my youth and its athletic sturdiness. It is all a welcome unburdening, for I trek to a favoured meditation spot, seeking communion with creation and replenishment of my soul. Now, well away from human habitation and its diversions, I begin tuning in to the voices and signs of the landscape.

New life is bursting forth everywhere, prompted by the waxing warmth of a vernal sun. In the distance the stream gurgles, splashing over rocks and beaver dams as the ubiquitous "sucker" fish school upstream to spawn. The grass beneath me is showing

green through the beige blades of last year's growth. Above, newly-arrived swallows dart about in the cloudless expanse, brilliant in a blue, yet undiluted by the haze of summer. As the robins "cherup," the crows "caw," and the sparrows "twitter," a frog chorus sings a joyful song of spring from its pond hideaway. A pair of deer cautiously approach the pond to drink, their heavy grey winter coats given way to a sleek reddish brown. Tawny gophers, newly emerged from hibernation, scurry to their holes at the warning whistles of predator lookouts. A hawk circles high above, intermittently responding with its mystic cry. I contemplate these expressions and recognize each as a hearty overture of greeting, a friendly welcoming to a kindred spirit. Through this vibrancy of life, I limp the final few strides up my hallowed hill. Finally arrived, I gratefully recline on the cool earth, catching my breath, lending reprieve to my aching hip, and rendering jubilant salutations to my hosts.

From this elevation I gaze across the teeming meadow below to the aspen stands beyond. Lustrous in the sunlight, they are covered in a velvet fuzziness of "catkins," giving them gentle shape and lending a fairy-tale surrealism to the groves. In like manner, "pussy willows" glow in the warm sun, giving the willow flat a soft look, surely fit for a giant's mattress. The dark spruce lining the creek, seem pleased to have this joy among them. Their boughs sigh happily in the breeze and shimmer a brighter emerald. In the distance beyond the groves, the town church steeple shows its spire, silhouetted against the horizon. It tells me the urban bustle is far away and invites me to engage in communion with the panorama around me. The landscape is alive with that universal spirit of oneness that pervades all being. It is my opportunity to connect and seek direction, enlightenment, and healing. I must be still and listen with my heart.

This hill must be one of those magical places where the spiritual energy of creation converges in a special way, a holy place where the Creator's voice is most audible. Coming here regularly, I leave each time with marvelous insights, refreshing revelations, and a peaceful sense of healing throughout my being. Having felt drawn here this late April morning, I recline on the ground and let my mind blend into the life force around me. I begin to hear; it is like singing; it is like a chorus of voices calling me. It is

THE SONG OF CREATION CALLING

We are the groves of springtime, our catkins softly glow.
Beside the ancient mill-stream, where still the waters flow.
We draw you to our bosom, and ask for you a prayer,
Master help him find his way, and keep him in your care.

The Lord does answer through us, our gentle forms will tell.
You must succor the people, their learning growth to swell.
Our friend your great endeavour, within that all grand scheme,
Wisdom's blooms to foster sure, a flower that must beam.

We are the pines of summer, we knew you from your birth.
Your fathers' paths among us, we cherished as great worth.
When you come to our forest, our voices sigh with joy.
Loved you we have, very dear, since you were just a boy.

Upon our pitchy pungence, a message we do bear.
From Mother and Creator, we on our green boughs swear.
To you there comes a calling, one great and wide and strong.
Teach and lead the humankind, for their growth you must long.

We are the hills of autumn; our heights they chant a verse.
Be welcome here among us, our brother from the first.
We love to have your presence, a time to share our thought,
One realm to another cross, upon this favoured spot.

We hear the Master bidding, through us a voice to use.
A message for the servant, you must not be recluse.
For as you love creation, the vastness out of doors,
Welfare of the child's mind, assigned is to be yours.

This is the wolf of winter, alone upon the ridge.
I hear your plaintiff query, as you approach the bridge.

You're one who shares my life force, I wish to show you lead,
Where it is you're best to go, and on with God's good speed.

My howl is raised up skyward, to heaven it's not lost.
The answer comes back bounding, upon a wisp of frost.
Your skills and gifts are given, with reason and I pray,
The course you're on today my son, I surely ask you stay.

I was shaken from my numinous meditation by that nagging ache in the left hip. It seemed as though the earth got a little harder each successive year. Nonetheless, I felt whole, properly integrated with the universe and ready to fulfill my role in it. I now knew, in spite of any new opportunities a doctoral degree might bring, that I must remain an educator of children, a leader of educators, an advocate for society's educational welfare. I must remain faithful to that calling. It was as Isaiah said, "Before I was born the Lord called me. . . . He said to me, 'You are my servant'" (Isaiah 49:1-3, *New International Version*). And I knew I must respond as Samuel did when "the Lord came and stood there calling. . . . Samuel said, 'Speak for your servant is listening'" (I Sam. 3:10, *New International Version)*. Yes, I was in harmony; I wanted to listen, and I would listen, for the voice of my calling is a story that I live by.

The enactment. What new stories would this mean? How would this doctoral experience change the way I lived out my educator story? I knew that to coalesce my socially constructed "self" with the requisite aptitudes and responsibilities of being a modern educator and educational leader, I must know myself well. And, although my research experience helped significantly deepen that self-knowledge, I also knew I was changed. As McKiel (1995, p. 2) recounted Parse's theory, people, beliefs, events, and other environmental elements change us and are changed by us in an ongoing rhythm, as we connect with and separate from them. Or as Smith (1994) suggested, "The very act of

writing forces a self-examination that changes both the self and quite possibly the life as well" (p. 288). My being is in never-ending transition, but where would these most recent influences lead me? These were perplexing questions, but many answers were coming to light. Mostly, it would be a refinement of existing attitudes and practices. The same heart that led me to become an educator also led me to doctoral studies, but there were new insights. It would be a time of strengthening, growing in confidence, and, generally, manifesting an increased capacity to serve and care for the humanity under my influence.

Firstly, my belief in the critical importance of education has been even further strengthened. It is as much a truism to suggest that teachers and administrators are at the heart of education as it is to suggest that education is at the heart of civilization. One easily concludes that the very continuation of our way of life depends on educators and a formal educational system. Further, as Gosh (1995, p. 3) stated, education always has and always will be shaped by economic, social, political, cultural, and historical forces, both globally and locally. Because these factors change with the times, it is natural that the requirements of education will change along with them. Hence, it is essential that I as an educational leader recognize the signs of the times and respond appropriately to them in a proactive manner--all this, of course, while I remain cognizant of the change constantly occurring within myself, that regularly revising story of me.

Secondly, few would dispute that these timely signs reveal unprecedented change occurring within and around us. Like a tsunami, it is overtaking us and inundating our lives, our organizations, and our world. William Glasser (as cited in Black, 1997) articulated it accordingly:

> So quickly that few have recognized what is happening, a society that lasted for ten thousand years has begun to dissolve. In its place a new society has been growing up, one in which the mores, habits, and goals of a hundred centuries are being profoundly altered. Some might take longer than others to recognize this colossal reorientation; many will undoubtedly spend the rest of their lives resisting the new direction of humanity. But it is real. (p. 1)

Morgan (1993, p. xxvii) spoke of the turbulence involved as people struggle in their attempts to deal with the new world realities. He noted particular evidence in the domain of organization and management where, all around, traditional structures are being reshaped or collapsing. As Geertz (1995) wrote, "It is necessary, then, to be satisfied with swirls, confluxions, and inconstant connections; clouds collecting, clouds dispersing" (p. 2). In the face of this convulsive onslaught, it is clear that I, as an educational leader, must continually reevaluate my practice to keep pace with the revolution underway.

Thirdly, in recognizing the signs of the times, I must closely scrutinize existing operational modes, applications, and structures. Morgan (1997) affirmed, "Effective managers and professionals in all walks of life have to become skilled in the art of 'reading' the situations they are attempting to organize or manage" (p. 3). In "reading" a situation, the decision on what to do is crucial, but the timing of the response is even more critical. As stated in recent country music lyrics, "You've gotta know when to hold 'em and know when to fold 'em." One cannot be like the leaders Jesus admonished: "Ye can discern the face of the sky, but ye cannot discern the signs of the times" (Mt. 16:3, King James Version). Hence, as a leader I must recognize the signs of the times and respond appropriately, sometimes to "build up" new ways and sometimes to "break down" old ones (Ecc. 3:1, King James Version).

With the above-mentioned considerations attended to, I will enact and live my new story as an educator and educational leader. Largely, this will be a story of servantship; however, within that context, there is a variety of personal and professional aspects that have become increasingly important to me.

Of Servantship

Over the past number of years I have been gradually coming to recognize myself as a "servant-leader" type. However, this "doctoral" experience has culminated that knowing in a most profound way. Hence, I will go forward living out a servant-leader story, more knowingly, confidently, and completely. Greenleaf (1977) stated the ethic underlying servant leadership as "caring for persons, the more able and the less able serving each other, . . . the rock upon which a good society is built, . . . one that is more just and more loving, one that provides greater creative opportunity for its people" (p. 49). This is basic to the way I think, capturing the soul and spirit of how I see the world. Hence, the bases from which I live out my new story are as Spears (1994, pp. 156-159) outlined: 10 basic characteristics containing the essence of servant leadership. Although they are holistically intertwined and interrelated, for the sake of presentation, they are presented separately.

Listening. Although all effective leaders require excellent communication skills, as a servant-leader I must be especially proficient at listening. I must demonstrate a deep commitment to listening and understanding both individuals and groups. For individuals, true listening builds new strength in them, and for groups, it identifies their collective wills and helps them clarify that will. As Morgan (1997) stated, "Leadership ultimately involves an ability to define the reality of others" (p. 189). The principle of true listening

is well articulated in the prayer of St. Francis: "Lord, grant that I may not seek so much to be understood as to understand" (cited in Greenleaf, 1977, p. 17). My desire to care and understand is well documented in the findings of this study.

This listening also involves "getting in touch with one's own inner voice and seeking to understand what one's body, spirit, and mind are communicating" (Spears, 1994, p. 157). This "getting in touch" means accepting the existence of our tacit knowledge and confessing it "as a legitimate instance of scientific knowing" (Polanyi & Prosch, 1975, p. 44). In addition, Greenleaf (1977) stated that the leader must "have *a sense for the unknowable* and be able to *foresee the unforeseeable*" (pp. 21-22). This is achieved through a deep listening that draws on the Jungian "collective unconscious" and our spirituality, a strong influencer revealed in this research. Besides drawing heavily on the tacit, intuitive, and spiritual domains, my listening will be joined with regular periods of deep refection in which I clarify my understanding of the meanings attached to our experiences.

Empathy. Through dedicated, insightful listening, I must strive to be empathetic and understand others. Servant leaders assume the good intentions of group members, not rejecting them as people, even when their behaviour or performance must be rejected. The goal must be the growth and development of *all* group members, caring also for those who must be sanctioned. As the trite epigram encourages, I must always "try to put myself in someone else's shoes." Spears (1994) concluded, "People need to be accepted and recognized for their special and unique spirits" (p. 157). As Rieser (1995) stated, "People grow taller when they are accepted for what they are" (p. 59). However, as Tarr (1995) reminded us:

> Being empathetic presents a challenge. It is not easy to walk the second or third mile in someone else's shoes. None of us likes to do it. It's much easier to walk away from a problem or unpleasant task. In fact it takes an exceedingly tough person to be a true listener, to be a person who can empathize with another. To be empathetic and mutually collaborative requires the servant leader, as the giver , to share something of himself or herself. To be open to another human being involves a risk and a vulnerability, but it brings with it great rewards. (p. 81)

I must be tolerant of imperfection, yet courageous enough to confront impropriety sensitively and caringly and to effect needed correction. This characteristic of servant leadership, empathy, coincides with the "understanding and caring" theme that emerged from this research. It is something I will apply with a renewed vigour.

Healing. Healing is a puissant force for the transformation and integration of people. As a servant-leader, I must recognize my potential to heal myself and others, hence helping to "make whole" the broken, the disintegrated, and the pained--physically, emotionally, and spiritually. I must act on this potential, demonstrating to people that I am a healer. I must avoid living out Coles' (1989, p. 198) great irony of life: that we remain happy when there is so much suffering around us. This is manifested in Liebowitz's (1989) comment: "To look at the agony of a fellow-being and remain aloof means death in the heart of the onlooker" (p. xxii). For me, a large part of healing is "peace making" in situations where the conflict is destructive and needless.

Although the holistic complex of servant leadership contributes to healing, one must remember the cathartic value of remembering one's story and, even more so, of telling it. Concurrently, it is also essential to encourage this in others, faithfully hearing them out. Hoffman (1994, pp. 1-4), in reflecting on the experience of Holocaust survivors, presented a powerful example of why it is important to engage in the

reconstruction of our experiences through memory. And, as important as it is for people with experiences like these, I believe it is no less important for others of more normal life experiences; that is, if we want everyone, no matter their lot in life, to seek after and eventually achieve their full positive potential as human beings.

Having experienced it personally in my own life, there is indeed a therapeutic value in the revisiting of past experiences through the vehicle of memory. I believe this sojourn puts us back in touch with the holistic nature of our beings and relationship with the universe. This holism is regularly stolen from our consciousness by the overwhelming "future shock" of living in a society where life moves at "warp speed." As Gyivicsan (1996, p. 1) concluded, through sharing our memories with others, we heal not only ourselves, but one another as well. And for me there is a joy in seeing others grow, develop, and fulfill themselves.

Awareness. Greenleaf (1977, p. 27) advocated the opening of perception, enabling one to get more of what is available from sensory experience and environmental stimuli. It requires that process of both regular sensory and deep, intuitive listening described earlier, hence stocking the conscious and unconscious mind with a richness of resources for future need. Here the full acknowledgment of tacit knowing and its fundamental effect on our practice is critical. As well, my spiritual dimension well equips me for drawing on the intuitive and unconscious receptacles of knowing. As servant-leader, this self-and general awareness assists me in understanding surrounding situations. The aphorisms "to know is to be prepared" and "knowledge is power" both illustrate the necessity to gain knowing through awareness. Accordingly, I must gather the knowledge I need to carry out other aspects of servant leadership.

However, it is important that I gather this knowledge narratively; that is, attempting to understand situations holistically. I must listen to people's stories and remember Geertz's (1995) caution, "There is no general story to be told, no synoptic picture to be had. . . . What we construct . . . are hindsight accounts of the connectedness of things that seem to have happened: pieced-together patternings, after the fact" (p. 2). As with many facets of leadership, awareness can be disconcerting because one often finds out things one would "just as soon not know." As Greenleaf (1977) saw, "Awareness is not a giver of solace--it is just the opposite. It is a disturber and an awakener. Able leaders are usually sharply awake and reasonably disturbed. They are not seekers after solace. They have their own inner serenity" (p. 28)

Persuasion. As a servant-leader, rather than using positional authority, I must depend on persuasion. Accordingly, Alter (1993, pp. 3-5) described an "empowering" alternative to the traditional power game of life: "where the object is to get what you want and where the winners often manipulate people and situations to their own advantage" (p. 3). She argued for a conception of shared power where people aspire to contribute to the happiness of the community, not engaging in the need to deceive or pillage one another. The dynamics of empowerment involve dialogue, decision making, and community support, all of which may be greatly enhanced by the use of narrative; that is, the sharing of our stories. She concluded that "coercive power is the curse of the universe; co-active power, the enrichment and advancement of every human soul" (p. 4).

Dunlap and Goldman (1991. pp. 5-29) also encouraged educational leaders to abandon the traditional "top-down" methods of influencing others' behaviour and begin employing "facilitative power." This is professional power "exercised and actualized

through others on the basis of trust and reciprocity" (p. 22). It is power and influence achieved through other professionals rather than exercised over them: by providing and arranging required resources; selecting and managing people who can effectively work together; supervising and monitoring to provide feedback and reinforcement rather than hierarchical control; and, providing networks to link groups and individuals who are able to contribute.

Consistent with the above-mentioned argument for "facilitative power," Blase and Roberts (1994, pp. 67-94) presented their research, which concluded that effective principals' ability to influence teachers is largely a function of teachers' willingness to be influenced. They found that 84% of the teachers assessed in the study indicated that a shared value system among themselves and their principals was the key attributer to their principal's ability to influence them. They described this style as "normative instrumental leadership," a process by which the principal empowers teachers, using influence strategies that are consistent with their personal and professional value systems. Examples of effective influence strategies were the use of praise, compliments, and rewards; the use of formal and informal support and advice; communication of expectations through visibility, modeling, suggestion, and the use of literature; and empowerment, through formal and informal involvement in decision making.

As I employ these humane and sensible means of sharing power, I must seek to convince group members and develop consensus among them. I must be dedicated to "hammering out" consensus, accepting members' ideas as much as possible, and integrating these into the outcome. My maxim must be "persuasion over coercion"--I am in the business of generating "followership." As well, I will use narrative, spending

considerable time with my teams, "swapping stories," as we arrive at consensual understandings. For it is true: One has no power unless one shares it.

Conceptualization. I must *conceptualize*, thinking beyond day-to-day realities, nurturing my "ability to dream great dreams" (Spears, 1994, p. 158). Today this quality is often referred to as "visioning," but it must be mediated by an awareness of and focus on the issues of daily operation. Hence, I must achieve an appropriate balance between the "mundane and the sublime." As Spears (1995, p. 6) stated, this is not always an easy thing, for tradition has inculcated leaders to achieve short-term operational goals. He suggested that as servant-leader, I must stretch my thinking to include broader-based conceptual thinking. This type of thinking, the rightful domain of boards, trustees, and CEOs, is viewed in juxtaposition to the operational thinking of "day-to-day" administration. As evidenced in the results emerging from this research, my predisposition to self-reflection is a valuable asset for my conceptualizing.

Senge (1995, pp. 233-234) added that our conceptualizing must be based on clear thinking, "especially regarding people's abilities to understand increasingly complex, interrelated realities" (p. 233). He concluded that "fuzzy thinking" is a fundamental evil, one standing in the way of a healthy society. As servant-leader I must go beyond just correcting problems and understand the deeper forces that shape reality and make enduring change difficult. Senge called this type of clear cognition, "systems thinking" (p. 234), something that leads to the exposure of underlying problems and their solutions, rather than just treating the symptoms.

Foresight. As servant-leader, I must have foresight, understanding the lessons of the past, the reality of the present, and the effect these may have on the future. This is

achieved by scanning the environment, remembering, and conjecturing about possible outcomes. It also requires that I believe in my intuitive capacities and be willing to depend on them, therein lying a wealth of insight and latent understanding. In using foresight, I must be cognizant of Kierkegaard's (cited in Geertz, 1995) observation that "life is lived forward but it is understood backward" (p. 166). As Geertz concluded:

> It is difficult to know what to do with the past. You can't live in it, no matter how much you may fantasize doing so, or how gravely nostalgic you grow when remembering it. You can't foretell future from it, however suggestive, promising, or ominous it may seem; things in the offing frequently don't arrive, things unhinted at frequently do. (p. 166)

However, as he further illustrated, one is able to perform an "after the fact . . .ex-post interpretation" (p. 167) of past events, thus providing an understanding in one temporal moment at least. In the narrative unity of our existence, these temporal moments accumulate, providing a recorded arsenal of remembered experience to help us understand the past and extrapolate to the present and future. For me, this must occur at both rational and intuitive, spiritual levels--as evidenced in this research.

The effective use of foresight depends upon my accepting the temporality of narrative existence; that is, the understanding "of 'now' as the moving concept in which past, present moment, and future are one organic unity" (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 25). Using the model provided by Crites (1971, p. 301), I must understand the "dramatic tension" between *memory* of past experience, *attention* to present experience, and *anticipation* of future experience, all coming to union in "every moment of experience" (p. 301). This means I must look holistically upon people, experience, and life, gaining my understanding through the various stories these elements of existence present. I must not give up the story, wrenching abstract generalities and immediacy from it; as Crites

warned, and "become alternately seized by desiccated abstractions and scatological immediacies, the light of the mind becoming a blinding and withering glare, the friendly darkness deepening in the chaotic night of nihilism" (p. 310). I must holistically consider the events of the moment and constantly compare them with a series of projections made in the past, at the same time projecting future events, with diminishing certainty as projected time runs into the indefinite future (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 26).

Stewardship. I will be in stewardship, given charge to hold something in trust for another. It is a grave responsibility, one that must be recognized clearly, not taking it lightly or selfishly. Stewardship is characterized first and foremost by a commitment to serve the needs of others for the greater good of society. One is motivated, not by glory, financial reward, prestige, or power; but rather, by a deep-seated desire to serve the good of humanity. I am thankful that these motives are truly a large part of my inner strength and guiding principles. This motivation is also strongly stimulated by my belief in the importance of education as a vocation, my desire to serve, and my desire to receive approval for doing the "right" things, all key findings in this study.

Lee and Zemke (1995, p. 103) defined stewardship as accountability without control and compliance, the willingness to be accountable for the health of the larger organization by operating in service rather than in control or compliance. They suggested that stewardship has more to do with being accountable and responsible for what has been created than it does with defining what to do, prescribing it, and directing others accordingly. As a servant-leader, I must treat others as partners, thus helping others also become stewards. To do this, Morgan's (1997, pp. 102-103) "brain metaphor" for the organization provides a theory. He made the point that members of the

organization may become "holographically imbued" with the goals, mission, and vision of the organization; hence, become inherently motivated to work towards them. Although this sounds idealistic and unattainable, it is a state that can be effectively worked toward by my living out a holistic "servant leadership" story.

Commitment to the growth of people. I must have commitment to the growth of people. Servant-leaders do all in their power to nurture the personal, professional, and spiritual growth of their group members. I must believe that "people have an intrinsic value beyond their tangible contributions as workers" (Spears, 1994, p. 159). This is an essential theme that pervades all leadership activities, permeated by a care for people, a desire to treat them with dignity, and a passionate hope to see each one be whole and fulfilled, in harmony with the universe. These are attributes that I have in good measure, being endowed with the traits illustrated in this research: sensitivity to and caring for people, diplomacy and peace-making ability, a desire to serve and help, trust and honesty, a compulsion for fairness and justice, a sense and love of humour, an ability and capacity to forgive, a social orientation, and a joy in seeing others grow and develop. These characteristics are culminated and perhaps integrated around an unbounded abhorrence of harmful discrimination, prejudice, and marginalization perpetrated against persons.

In practice, I may do the following things noted by Spears (1995, p. 7): make funds available for personal and professional development, take a personal interest in employee's ideas and suggestions, encourage worker involvement in decision making, and actively assist laid-off workers to find other employment. However, mostly it means taking time for people, listening to them, and seriously trying to understanding them, all the while treating them with dignity and respect. For me, this dignity, respect, and my

spiritual well-being hinge on an absolute dedication to total honesty. Although it must be handled in a caring and sensitive manner, as Crites (1979, p. 110) noted, we are able to overcome the rampant self-deception among us by a sheer act of will--a devotion to honesty. Overall, to achieve this commitment to people, again it means employing all of the servant leadership characteristics in a narrative whole.

Building community. Lastly, I must be a builder of community. Spears (1994) said "the servant leader senses that much has been lost in recent human history as a result of the shift from local communities to large institutions as the primary shaper of human lives" (p. 159). Hence, I must seek ways of building community in my landscape; that is, a sense of belonging, relatedness, pride, loyalty, and caring for member welfare. I believe this can be done in our institutions by living out a servant-leader story. I want to live out this story, fulfilling the vision as Greenleaf (1977) articulated:

> All that is needed to rebuild community as a viable life form for large numbers of people is for enough servant-leaders to show the way, not by mass movements, but by each servant-leader demonstrating his own unlimited ability for a quite specific community-related group. (p. 39)

Peck (1995, pp. 87-98) proposed that the servant leader charged with building community must have high moral and ethical standards, a sense of humour, a nurturing orientation, and a strong value base consistent with the tenets of servant leadership. As well, he identified peace making, consensual decision-making style, and a strong spiritual value base as critical elements involved in the building of the "authentic community" (p. 87). Finally, he advocated that the leader have more than just a desire to lead, but a "calling" (p. 95). All of these attributes are part of my being, as identified earlier in the findings of this research. Hence, I believe I am well equipped to be a builder of authentic

community; that is, one pervaded by a commitment to communicate honestly and openly --authentically. I believe, as Peck concluded, that "organizational structure and community, rather than being incompatible, are potentially synergistic" (p. 98).

An epilogue. These 10 characteristics, although not exhaustive, capture the essence of servant leadership and provide an overview of the vital components. I am committed to this orientation of leadership, I believe it can be learned, and I hope I am able to influence others accordingly. When combined with the leadership traits outlined by Hackman and Walton (1986, pp. 110-116)--that is, courage, emotional maturity, an ethically grounded value system, and creative, imaginative capabilities--it becomes a powerful formula for success. Also, when it is combined with my renewed openness and acceptance of serendipitous synchronicities and the active hand of God in my work, it becomes doubly powerful.

Servant leadership includes what Gurr (1996, pp. 221-224) described as "tranformational leadership" (p. 221), which is distinguished by the sharing of power in a less directive and more collaborative mode of influence. Leadership power is gained by developing and marshaling a system of shared values and common commitments within the group, hence generating "followership" among the members. It requires the leader to provide individual support, intellectual stimulation, and good modeling of professional practice to followers. Delegation of leadership responsibilities and participatory decision making must be practiced. Overall, the leader strengthens the organizational culture, transforming it through effective communication, use of symbols and rituals, and by stimulating change.

Some have argued that this leadership style is a new feature on the organizational landscape. Gurr (1996, p. 222) cited Leithwood (1994), who contended that prior leadership forms have evolved to the transformational mode in response to new complexities in a turbulent and rapidly changing context. On the whole this may be a trend, but there is much credence in Gurr's citation of Peterson and Lezotte (1991), who conjectured, "In earlier findings, it may be that this evanescent and subtle aspect of school leaders' actions was not identified" (p. 222). For example, Holdaway (personal communication, October 27, 1997) noted Chester Barnard's 1938 proclamation that leaders really have no power unless they give it away, allowing it to manifest in "followership" within the group.

As Greenleaf (1977) said, "We are the product of our own history, we see current prophesy within the context of past wisdom" (pp. 8-9). Perhaps it is as King Solomon mused almost 3,000 years ago, "There is nothing new under the sun" (Ecc. 1:9, New International Version). Possibly there is merit to recent speculation that the "servant-leader" orientation is a hitherto unidentified Jungian archetype. As such, it would have continually manifested in many people down through the ages and to the present, thus lending credence to Solomon's musings. This view would certainly be consistent with the observations and experiences of many leadership students and practitioners, this one included. In any event, I shall live out this story in my practice, new and rejuvenated from this research experience.

The Allusions and Admonitions: So What?

So to what do my findings allude or imply? What is the significance of my research outcomes? What advice should be given to others as a result of this work?

Allusions. The main implication arising from this research is that I have gained an increased and deepened understanding of myself. The full impact of this will not be felt until I return to active practice as an educator and educational leader. However, the statement of intent lies in the previous discourse on servantship. Secondly, I will be an avid reformer and advocate for the new story of reform as espoused by Connelly and Clandinin (1998, pp. 216-230). This involves the bringing together of two stories: one, "a story of teacher knowledge understood, metaphorically, in the context of a storied school landscape, . . . [and two] a story of teacher voice as teachers inquire into their practice, make adjustments, and thereby, participate as authors of school reform" (pp. 216-217). They disagreed with the extant, orthodox view of what "school reform" should be and ventured a new story of it. The old story is one of generalizations about contexts, a hierarchical view of theory being "above" practice, and an agenda driven by bureaucracies rather than by teachers.

Drawing from the school reform story in their research, Connelly and Clandinin (1998, pp. 224-230) metaphorically advocated school reform as a parade in which the participants "dance along," becoming attuned to it and seeking "moments for possibilities when new stories bubble up" (p. 229). These new stories are opportunities from which to initiate required change. They concluded:

> The storied professional knowledge landscape on which we all live our lives is understood from a narrative knowledge standpoint, perhaps better seen as *not* the war zone for reform with front lines, trenches, action plans, buy-ins and buy-outs, strategists and so on, but as a space for negotiation, a middle ground for understanding how to shift the parade in more imaginative ways. In such a view, school reform becomes a question of the possibility of school participants reimagining their professional lives. This imagined middle ground shifts the terms for reform from initiative, control and urgent problem-solving for either outside reformers or

> individuals working alone or together to new terms such as stories to live by, negotiation, improvisation, imagination and possibility. (p. 230)

This view resonates most harmoniously with Morgan's (1997, pp. 261-273) discussion of "the theory of chaos and self-organization on the one hand and complexity theory on the other . . . [as they] contribute important elements to a holistic theory of change" (p. 261). In his discussion he used the example that a butterfly flapping its wings in New Guinea can cause a hurricane in the Caribbean. I would contend that as an individual educator, researcher, administrator, and policy maker, I can be a "butterfly" if I have faith and play the role wisely. As Morgan indicated, I need to seek practicable, high-leverage initiatives that can trigger a transition from one "attractor pattern" (p. 268) to another. These "bifurcation points" (p. 265) are often found in paradoxes and tension points. Form must be allowed to emerge; it cannot be imposed without destructive violence being perpetrated on the natural order of things. The "parade" metaphor identified a means and process to identify bifurcation points and cause the "flip" to new attractor patterns--one that is inherently more holistic and natural, one of narrative unity.

Admonitions. Having consummated a narrative inquiry on the influences shaping the participants and me to become educators, I do have stern recommendations for educator candidates, vocational guidance counsellors, university teacher education admission committees, and administrators of educator recruitment and selection. These recommendations relate entirely to my belief in the importance of educator candidate selection. As Black (1997) suggested, based on the complexity of today's modern context, the actual definition of a teacher should be

> someone who annually implements, integrates, individualizes, diversifies, enhances, translates, compacts, animates, and writes curriculum while maneuvering endless hoops and hurdles, maintaining a positive attitude

> and enormous energy, and thriving on the challenge of the seemingly impossible. (p. xiii)

This definition, delivered with somewhat of a "tongue in cheek," was intended to underscore the complicated and difficult nature of teaching today. Gill (1998) noted the awesome responsibility of teachers: "If teaching were easy, anyone could do it" (p. 5). The facts are clear. Teachers must know and care for their students, each of whom is a precious life unfolding that can be either fostered or impaired. I repeat, from the beginning of this research text, the "precious life" will make a difference in the world; and for a few short moments in the grand scheme of things, the educator has some influence on whether that difference will be positive or negative.

Hence, it is perhaps necessary to send some messages. To the educator candidates, you must seriously contemplate, being sure to realize what teaching is and ensuring that it meshes with the attributes and aspirations you have. To vocational counsellors, you must help and guide these potential educators in their decision making. To selection committees and administrators, you must help these people ensure that they do not make a costly mistake, for themselves, your institution, and most of all, for our children and youth. As Gill (1998) concluded in her first commandment of good teaching, "Thou shalt not become a teacher unless you feel a calling to this mother of all professions" (p. 5). This calling will be self-defined and different for each person, taking into consideration individual aptitudes, attributes, beliefs, and motivators. It may be present at the beginning of one's career exploration, or it may develop along the way; however, "at the end of the day" it is essential that teachers have this calling if they are to be successful, fulfilled, and happy. All must choose carefully--the stakes are high.

Of Sacredness

Lincoln (1995, p. 284) spoke of sacredness as an emerging criterion for judging the worth of qualitative and interpretive research. Sacredness, as such, is a quality that joins the research model with ecological concerns in a manner that recognizes and honours the ecological as well as the human. The precipitating anxiety is that the seeds for destruction of the human spirit lie in the destruction of the physical environment. Hence, it is only by regaining "the sense of sacredness about that which nourishes and sustains us [that we can] learn how both to inquire sanely and to live in peace" (p. 284). She concluded with the notion that science has a sacred and spiritual character, emerging from a profound concern for human dignity, justice, and interpersonal respect.

I believe this narrative inquiry is a sacred work. I have used my love for the natural environment and my altruistic predisposition to humanity as fundamental foundations in all aspects of the research. The theme of my stories, my relationship with the participants, and the outcomes of the study all qualify under Lincoln's (1995) definition of sacredness. Most of all, this research text is a "sacred story" in the sense alluded to by Crites (1971, p. 295), where my sense of self and world is created through it, and where I live in it. It is a story I live by, a sacred embodiment of me and my calling.

CHAPTER IX

A Story of Reflections

To everything there is a season
and a time to every purpose
under the heaven
--Ecc. 3:1, *King James Version*

As I come to the conclusion of this research journey, it has truly been as Glesne and Peshkin (1992, p. 179) foretold: an odyssey into my discipline, my practice, and my soul. Now the time has come for quiet reflection, to think about that journey and remember places along the way. As King Solomon reflected, it is a time to gather those "scattered stones" of memory and recollect them (Ecc. 3:5, King James Version).

On the Quest

To me, the quest for knowledge and wisdom is indeed an honourable and worthy search, as penned by King Solomon so long ago:

> Happy is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding! For her profit is better than profit in silver, and better than gold in her revenue; she is more precious than corals, and none of your choice possessions can compare with her (Prov. 3: 13-15, Douay version).

In addition to the happiness and intrinsic reward Solomon saw in gaining wisdom and understanding, I also find myself possessed with a love of learning. Accordingly, I set out on this educational journey of doctoral studies to satiate that appetite for learning, contemplation, and understanding. However, during the course of my studies, I was once interviewed by a colleague on the question, "What is the value of doctoral study for a practicing field administrator like yourself ?" On the issue of value, I was provoked and stimulated to some deep thought. There certainly was profound value, but what was it?

As I reflected on this question, I had many ideas about why I had come back to university. They ranged from the sublime to the mundane: I wanted to expand my understandings of life; I was at a point in my life where I needed to reflect on my practice and my being; I needed a change of pace, for the last five years of restructuring in the field had been taxing; I enjoyed studies, and I needed some kind of reprieve where my pensionable service would not be jeapordized. As I sifted through these varied motivations I wondered what the deeper essential reason was. I wondered what value this reason had. As I contemplated, I lapsed into my favoured metaphor, that of nature.

Seeking in the forest. For me, being a superintendent in a school division is like living in a forest. It can be a beautiful place full of meadows, streams, creatures, wonders, and mysteries, and one can fancy being there. It can also be a frightening place with many hazards and hidden dangers. As one moves about in the forest one becomes very familiar with it. One knows all the paths, where the different animals live--the safe ones and the dangerous ones--where the pretty flowers are, where the moss grows best on the trees, which trees are highest, and which are the warm and cold places--the safe and dangerous places. One comes to know the forest intimately.

Occasionally, one wonders what it is like outside of the forest and goes on an excursion to the plains, deserts, or valleys. But the whole time one is away, one thinks about the things of the forest and sees "outside things" in the "forest way." One happily returns to the forest refreshed and ready to continue living there, ready to enjoy its pleasures and cope with its perils. This cycle continues sunrise after sunrise and summer after summer. Then on a cold, cloudy day as winter approaches, one realizes that it is harder and harder to find fulfillment and appreciate the forest, so one seeks for deeper

meaning. It is the call of the lone wolf, high upon the ridge. As she lifts her voice heavenward, one heeds the call and prepares for the journey.

One is called to leave the forest for a long time. But still loving the forest, one climbs up on a high place, far away from the forest, and looks back at it. As one views for a long time, the forest appears very different from this new mountain-top perspective, familiar but unfamiliar. One still knows the forest intimately, but because one is far away and not in the forest for a long time, it begins to look and feel different. After a time of adjustment, one begins to understand the forest in other ways. One starts learning how to see "forest things" in the "mountain way," and it brings all sorts of new meanings and understandings about the forest. It is novel and exciting to contemplate the world other than the "forest way."

One realizes that in going back into the forest, it will seem like a different place in some ways. The journey will have changed one such that one will never be quite the same again. This was a tantalizing thought, both exhilarating and disconcerting at the same time. One loved many things about seeing and understanding in the forest way. One knows, however, that one will be a better warden of the forest upon returning because one will understand it more clearly. Having studied the forest from afar will bring new insights and new ideas about forest living and forest care. One will be more capable of finding peace, while enjoying its beauties and managing its risks.

Seeking meaning and knowing. With this storied representation came an understanding of the value lying in the studies I had undertaken. As I reflected backward on my colleague's question, I was also amazed at how much that conversation had elucidated and expanded the meanings I had attributed to my experiences. Meanings that

were already established in my mind were reconstructed in new and more powerful ways by the conversation. My own story was "restoried" in front of my very eyes, creating a new reality for me while I was aware of the act. This was the process of "socially constructing meaning." For the first time, my consciousness was raised to recognize the experience of being involved in the social construction of meaning. It was like being involved in some research experiment where one is able to watch the phenomenon reveal itself. It was indeed an exciting adventure in learning.

Now as I survey this experience after the fact, I am also led to marvel at the source of my knowledge. In many cases our knowledge comes from outside ourselves and then mingles in some mystical way with our tacit knowledge, hence producing meaning and understanding. But, there are other times, such as the above-mentioned experience, when one is stimulated to draw entirely from one's tacit reserve. There I was enlightened as hidden understandings were raised to a conscious level, coaxed from that vast reservoir of tacit knowing by a conversation--a social interaction. Respecting tacit knowledge, I am particularly enchanted by Clandinin and Connelly's (1996) idea that one's "personal practical knowledge . . . as experiential, as personal, as having a subjective quality and a *precognitive bodily basis* [my emphasis] that is expressed as tacit professional/cultural knowledge" (pp. 67-68). This notion fits well with my personal ontology and epistemology, also allowing for the consideration of Jung's (1960) universal "collective unconscious" (p. 114) as a factor in our "coming to know."

Because of the presence of our tacit knowledge, Polanyi (1958, p. 18) postulated that the pursuit of complete objectivity, as usually attributed to the exact sciences, is in fact a delusion and a false ideal. His contention was that our knowing of experiences,

events, and phenomena in our environment is always mediated by the subjectivity of our own tacit knowledge. In our efforts to reach this objectivity, we only "abandon the cruder anthropocentrism of our senses . . . in favour of a more ambitious anthropocentrism of our reason" (pp. 4-5). And, of course, the meanings we attach to the experiences, events, and phenomena are socially constructed, a product of language and symbols through human communication. In closing, however, I must add a proviso to my reflections about the social construction of meaning and, hence, knowing.

I must disagree with any position that there is no meaning inherent in my being aside from that ascribed to it by humans through language and symbols. I do not argue with the postulation that, as humans, the procedure by which we ascribe meaning is unquestionably the use of language, symbols, and narration. However, I contend that there is indeed meaning ascribed to my being before human thought and language can get to it. It is a meaning bestowed by the transcendent being and creator of the universe, namely God. We do not readily know this meaning and must seek it out through acts of faith and intuitive receptivity. However, I fully agree that our seeking for, and expression of, this meaning is a product of language and symbol; hence, a social construction. But, for those who seek in this way, it is a search inspired by the spiritual realm. And, as King Solomon implied, gaining knowledge is indeed a commendable pursuit. I think it should be the quest of all humanity, to learn more about themselves, their world, and their fellows--for the greater good of all creation.

On Writing

I began writing this research text as Mallon (1984) said: "the way most diaries begin, all at once, with a rolling up of sleeves, an intake of breath--and here goes" (p. 8).

However, as I rolled up those sleeves and honed my "keyboarding" skills on the word-processor, I had to deal with an issue. It was an issue McMillen (1994, p. 2) identified in her reflections on Alice Kaplan's memoir. Kaplan, an academic, a professor of French, was motivated to write in search of why she had such a passion for that language and culture. Similarly, I was motivated to write in search of why I had chosen to become an educator. Extrapolating from McMillen's description, I believe that Kaplan and I faced the same challenge. Kaplan was portrayed as struggling to change her writing style from the "scholarly voice" into which she was socialized. "She had no idea how difficult it would be to shed her scholarly voice" (McMillen, 1994, p. 2).

The style. The notion of "being socialized into a writing style" was resoundingly sonorous for me. Being one who takes great pride in quality literary expression, I have always tried not to stray from orthodoxy in my writing style. And I have never been particularly troubled by this "stay-at-home" attitude either. I think, for me, it was enough that I could write and be appreciated for it over the years--by teachers, professors, and employers. However, after a study in narrative, I began to experience an epiphany. I came to know that figurative, less prosaic writing, more in keeping with my nature. I know I am fortunate, for it seems that almost any style of writing comes fairly easily to me. It seems that the structures and techniques of expression are somehow "in my bones," and it just seems to come. I can't explain how or why, as Polanyi (1966) wrote, for "we can know more than we can tell" (p. 4).

What I have found challenging though is that initial period where I am transitioning from one genre to another. It is like moving from the use of one language to another, taking some readjustment time. This has been notable over the years, as I wrote

for different professors and employers. The professors often had slightly different perspectives on the ontologies, epistemologies, and axiologies of science. Likewise, the employers often had varying perspectives on the writing style they preferred. Wanting to achieve maximum grades with professors and maximum appreciation with employers, I strove to meet the expectations of each in my writing. In the process, I found myself deliberately and calculatedly using different rhetorical gestures and stylistic formats.

The greatest leap, however, has been the one experienced in this doctoral study. It was that leap from traditional scholarly writing to narrative writing, at the same time meeting Edel's (1984) qualifications: (a) establishing "a proper relationship between that which is research and scholarship, and that which is narrative" (p. 204); and (b) recalling that "like needle and thread, . . . content and form are inseparable" (p. 204). In making this leap, I have experienced great joy and elation in putting myself back into my writing. As Kadar (1992, p. 10) stated, I did not continually write about someone else and pretend to be absent from the text. My writing has found me.

The process. McMillen (1994) noted how Kaplan, also a singer, found similarity in writing and singing: "Neither should be too hard, 'It's placing my voice the right way to get it out there, not hiding in a cavern, in the back of my throat,' she says" (p. 2). This talk of likeness between singing and writing resonates with Crites (1971, p. 294) and Dewey (1887, p. 161) as they noted the rhythmic and musical qualities of narrative. Being a lover of music, one who finds special fulfillment in that artifice, I appreciate the analogy. I also wish to get my voice out, but I wish to do it with the rhythmic music of my soul. This process involved many emotion-filled moments as I wandered through the backwoods of my memories, finding treasures to bring forward in self-expression. A

towel to dry away tears of happy reminiscence was my constant companion through this dissertation.

Then there was the near Sisyphean undertaking of writing and rewriting. For both, it was often as Glesne and Peshkin (1992, p. 155-158) noted where "the demons of escapism loom large" (p. 155). This was not such a problem on those contemplative winter days when I sat, lap-top in place, in front of a blazing fireplace, but it was especially troublesome on those warm, sunny, spring and summer days when I would have been much happier wandering some favourite nature haunt. However, heeding the advice of Glesne and Peshkin (pp. 155-158), I was able to prevail. I developed realistic long- and short-term schedules with completion goals in place. I maintained a quiet, comfortable, and stimulating office space at home with my desk-top computer, but also used a lap-top. This allowed me to "be mobile" and write in different places, sometimes those more convenient and sometimes those more stimulating. I began each session with editing and rewriting. The seemingly incessant rewriting, as Van Manen (1984) stated, involved "a carefully cultivated thoughtfulness" (p. 67). My stories rarely looked and sounded sufficient to me without what seemed a myriad of revisits.

The product. In McMillen's (1994, pp. 1-2) account of memoir writing, the central thesis was that memoir is a powerful catalyst to deeper self-understanding. She said this genre of writing was a way to understand one's life while living it. Further, she suggested that in memoir "the writer grows into a different self--and a self often perceived to be better" (p. 2). This view certainly conforms to the outcome I have experienced in my writing. It has been a marvelous experience of emotive introspection, all leading to a deeper self-knowing, and I believe, a more well-rounded person.

And if the intrinsic personal product of this work was my self-development, then from a technical viewpoint it is a narrative research text, telling a story through the elements of temporality and causality. Consistent with Chatman's (1990, pp. 2-8) distinction among the text types of narrative, description, and argument, my dissertation contained all of them. But, as he indicated, no one type was treated as intrinsically privileged; they were "at each other's service" (p. 8). As a narrator, I routinely digressed to describe and argue, with descriptive or argumentative sentences contributing to my narrative text. Also, my chapters contained varying emphases respecting these elements, all of them holistically woven together into the fabric of a story--a story that tells of my becoming as an educator.

Chapter I contains a strong flavour of description and argument with a storied glue holding it together. Chapters II and III, the literature review and method account, respectively, are wholly descriptive and argumentative, but they include storied elements and are tied together narratively. Chapter IV is a compilation of participant narratives descriptively joined into a series of short stories. Chapter V is my memoir, wholly a narrative with strong descriptive elements, relying occasionally on argument. Chapter VI is purely descriptive, illustrating the themes emerging from the field texts, although some argument is involved in justifying thematic categories. Chapter VII, although a story, is heavy in argument, as I extrapolate a theory from the emergent findings. Chapters VIII and IX are highly narrative, but supported by strong elements of description and argument as I discuss the findings and reflect on the process. Overall, the entirety of the work comes together as a narrative, depending on story telling, describing, and arguing wherever appropriate, given the topic and intent.

On the Participants

Schulz (1997, pp. 1-2) stated that narrative inquiry is a powerful way of coming to know and understand the lives of educators and the complex nature of their work. She felt that research founded on their stories conveys reality in a way that no theoretical formulation can, her rationale being that storytelling is at the heart of human conduct. As such, we were indeed a group of six storytellers, and it was a rich experience for me to get to know myself and the five others better. The five others were all people whom I had gotten to know professionally prior to their involvement in this research. Some I knew from university classes and some from professional contacts. In my mind, what they shared were varying qualities that ended up endearing me to each of them as the study progressed. Each was very different, but I have come away with a respect, admiration, and affection for each of them. As I reflect on the relationship I have been able to develop with each, I am struck by Segal's (1995, p. 14) observation that very different people can establish surprisingly close and enduring friendships. With each of these people, I would like to maintain an ongoing friendship. However, my fear and sadness is that time, distance, and the pressure of living out our own lives will keep us apart.

On Concluding

It is with a certain amount of nostalgia that I conclude this narrative inquiry. In spite of the anxieties, deadlines, writer's blocks, and sunny days calling me to nature, it has been a labour of love. It has been a rich experience of introspection, resonance, reflection, and growth. It is an experience that has changed me and will change the way I face the world hereafter. And as I consider my "world hereafter," I recall Lugones

(1987), who advocated "playfulness, world traveling, and loving perception" (p. 3) as one negotiates the terrain of life. In this work she spoke of the different "worlds" we navigate within our own culture and geography. Also, she alluded to the subtle variations of language as it is used in different contexts.

To express my sentimentality about moving on from this particular phase of my life, I will divert to another form of expression. It is a distinct dialect: one that I learned well among the pioneers of my childhood; one that even a few remaining beings still speak. It is a language fertile in the explicit, scatological, invective expression of the people who worked close to the earth, far from the refinements of higher learning. My nostalgic expression comes in the form of a story, including a dialogue between an "old-timer" and me.

As I struggle to maintain control, the car lurches like a drunkard, in and out of the deep ruts on the slippery narrow track. The driveway is long and sinuous, overhung by mournfully drooping branches, bent down by the weight of wet snow on their still golden foliage. The first snow of autumn has fallen heavily, blanketing the countryside, breaking branches, and leaving the rural roads slick and treacherous. It is a sad time, for this is the first ominous reminder that our gloriously colorful, warm, and blue-hazed "Indian summer" is over. I reach the end of the driveway and "pull up" in front of a small wood-frame house, the walls stained dark brown from many years of unprotected weathering. I disembark amidst the din of a barking dog, and proceed to the entrance, producing three bold, staccato knocks on the door.

As I wait in the wet, chilled gloom of early evening, I hear rustlings inside. Soon the door is creaked open by an elderly man in well-worn blue-denim overalls, strapped

over a green and black plaid flannel work shirt. He is bald except for a white fringe around the sides and back of his head. His seasoned features are friendly and jovial as he squints, trying to discern who might be descending on his home this dreary afternoon. After a flicker of recognition in his laughing eyes, he exclaims, "*Wull I'll be damned! C'mon in an make yurself t'home! How a yu bin doin? Haven't seen yu fur uh coon's age.*" After removing my wet footwear, I enter, saying, "*Wull thanks amillion, an how you fokes bin keepin? Yur lookin good!*" He then ushers me into the small kitchen, offering me a seat at the table and a cup of coffee, responding, "*Wull we bin doin not too bad. It's bin a helluva nice summer 'n fall so far, but this scares me,*" as he gestures out the window. He continues, "*I'm worried we'll git anuther wun uh them winters like last. It was a royal bitch--cold enuf t' freeze the ass off a brass monkey. An the way it is, we caint afford anuther like that; hog prices aren't worth a pinch of coonshit, and we're broke flatter than piss on a platter as it is. An we're gettin too old for this doin chores biznuss. There's gotta be a better way. The Missus an me are figurin on sellin out one uh these days an movin t' town. They got one uh them old fokes homes in there, an we might move in. Doe know fur sure yet though.*"

Already feeling a bit down about the weather and the fact that I'm on my way back to the city to resume university classes tomorrow, I feel compassion for the old fellow. I softly respond, "*Wull that'd be a cryin shame if yu moved off the farm--you bin on this here place fur a coon's age. Doe know what it'd be like with yu gone-- it's bin a lot uh years.*" I pause and reflect, remembering some happier times I shared with him. I smile and lean foreward: "*I'll never furgit the time yu put the dog on them pigs when they got in the garden--member that? The cockeyed things wint through that fence like it*

wuzn't even there! Yeh, an it wuz hotter than the hubs uh hell that summer, wuzn't it? I member ole Jack [the dog] *wuz so puffed out after chasin them pigs, he jist wint an crawled intuh the waterin trough.*"

He smiles. "*Yeh, wull those was the good ole days. Back then things was a lot better than now. I dunno whut it is--seems the world's goin t' hell in a hanbasket. The other day ole Jim said he was packin it in an movin tu town too. He sold out t' that big outfit frum down south. They bin buyin up land all round the country. Purty soon there ain't gunna be any little guys like us any more.*" With a more somber look, his eyes trance off out the window. "*Yeh, like I said--got a good notion tu move tu town,*" as his voice trails off. Then quickly changing the subject, he looks back at me and asks, "*So are yu still goin to that university up there in the city? Heard yu wuz goin in fer a teacher.*" I explain, "*Yup, that's whut I'm doin. It ain't too bad aneither, cuz with them allergies I got, it's gunna beat hell outa milkin cows, feedin pigs, er any kind a farmin, fer that matter. But I got two more years fore I kin come out un teach.*"

He looks at me quizzically, cocking his head as he says, "*Yu know, I alwus thought you'd be good at somthin like that. I sure hope yu keep it up an don't quit. Yeh, that'd be a damn shame if yu quit on us boy, don't do that. Yu know, it gives some of us old timers hope tu see you yungins makin good fer yerselves.*" After a few more comments about the weather, neighbours, and "next year," I note the time of evening and remember a long trip back to the city. I gather myself, saying, "*Wull, s'pose I'd better git goin--got a long drive ahead uh me yet tunite, an that potlickin hiway is gunna be slipperyer than hell. A man's liable tu hit the ditch in this kind a weather, an that'd be a proper pain in the ass. So we'll be seein yu. An don't take iny wooden nickles. Yu know,*

things is gunna pick up fer yu too, I jist know it." He smiles and slaps me on the back as I walk to the door. He says, "*Be seeing yu. I'll say hullo tu the missus fer yu whin she gits home,*" as he waves out the door.

I drove away "slip-sliding" up the old driveway, sick at heart. It seemed that all things dear to me were passing away. In our brief visit, the oldtimer had reminded me of this incessant passage of time. My world was changing and I wasn't sure how much I liked that. Yes, there was the excitement of the big city, university, and the future of being a teacher, but how I longed to see those cherished things preserved. I knew, nonetheless, that memory was the only hold I had on these precious times. Pulling up to the main roadway, I caught the glint of a bright star through a break in the heavy overcast. It took my mind off the despondency of the moment and gave me hope for the future. I drove away remembering cherished pasts and dreaming future dreams.

Hence, I will do the same now, as I complete this research, this dissertation, this association, this memoir. Like focussing on a bright star, I will remember the cherished pasts of this journey, and dream future dreams of how it will make me a better servant. It is as I. B. Singer (as cited in Schulz, 1997) said:

> When a day passes it is no longer there. What remains of it? Nothing more than a story. If stories weren't told or books weren't written, man would live like the beast, only for the day. Today, we live, but by tomorrow today will be a story. The whole world, all human life, is one long story. (p. 1)

And now, after many months, I conclude this journey into my practice and my soul. Thus, with the time for speaking now over until another time, it is, as King Solomon said so long ago, "a time to be silent" (Ecc. 3:6, New International Version).

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